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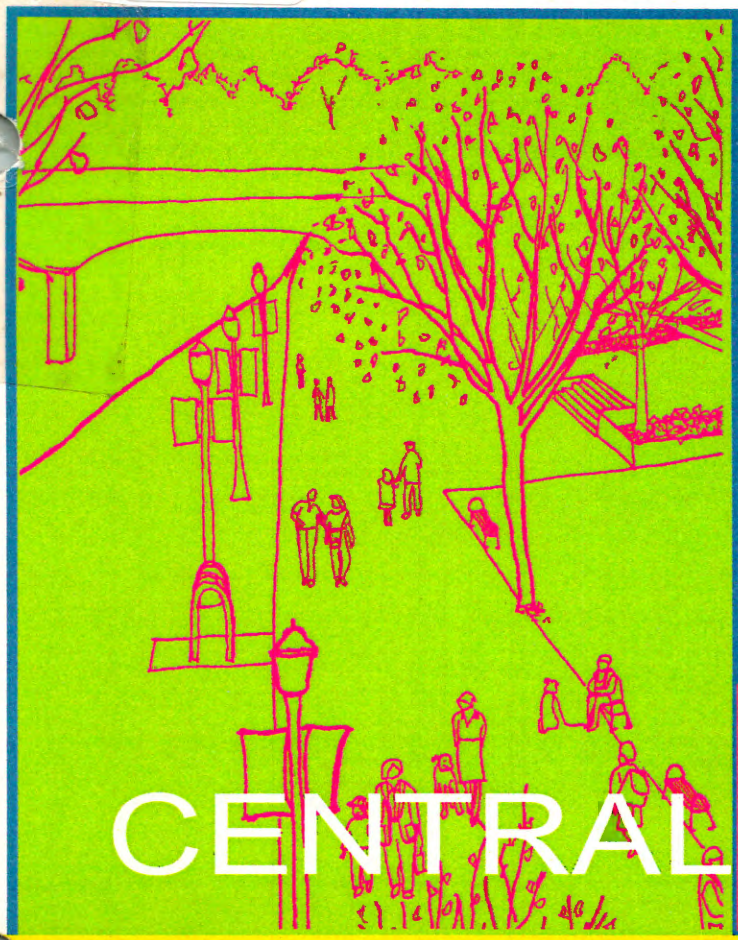
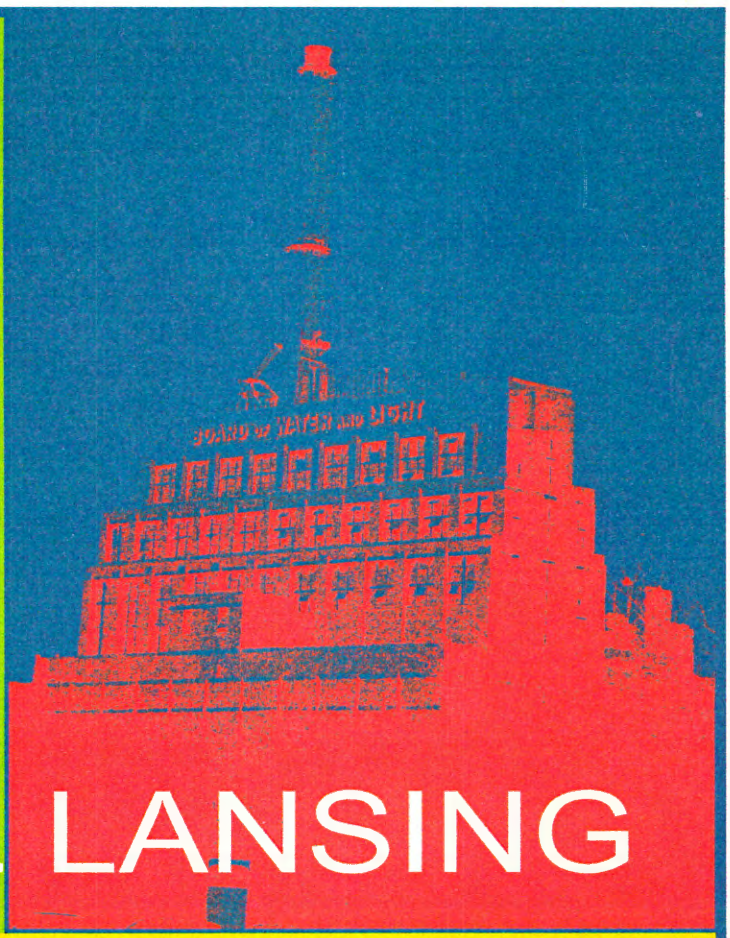
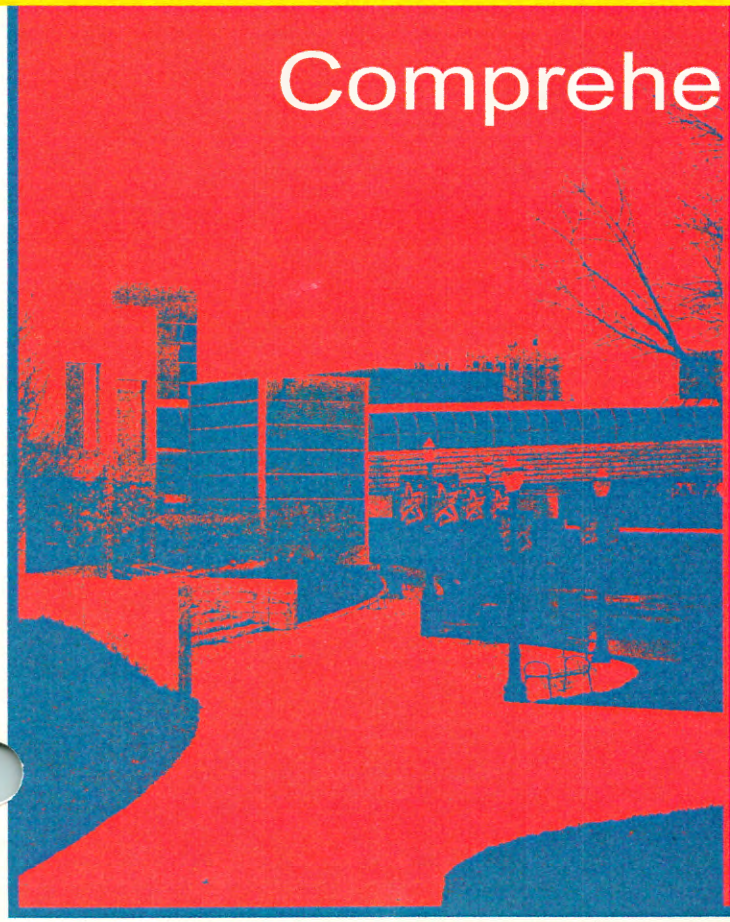
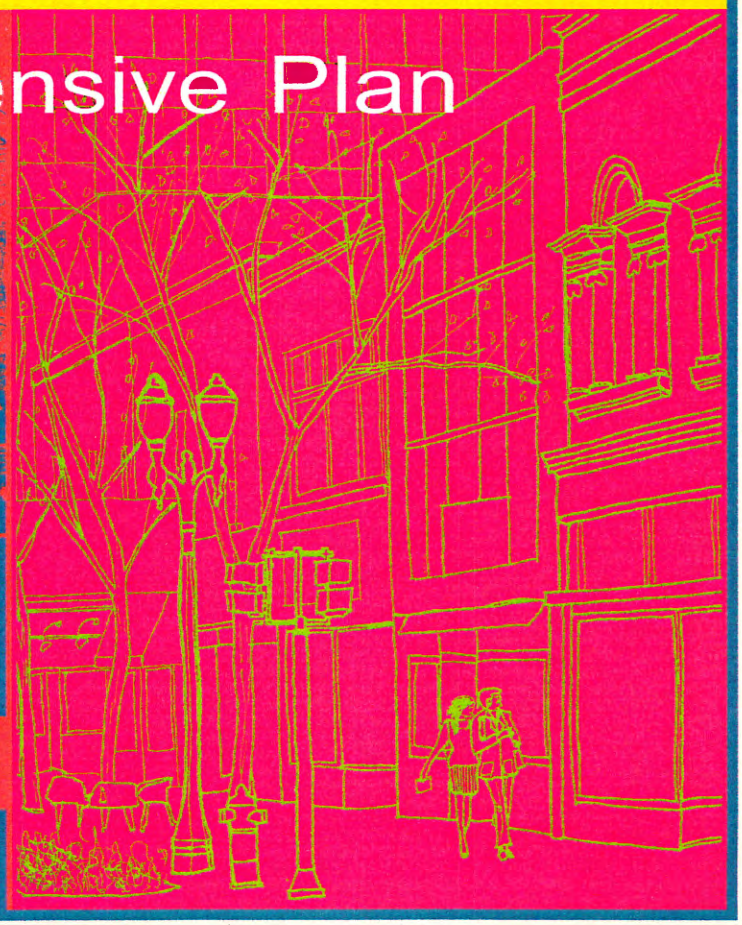




CENTRAL LANSING

Comprehensive Plan





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CENTRAL LANSING COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: A Revitalization Strategy for Lansing's City Center

City of Lansing, Michigan

August 1999

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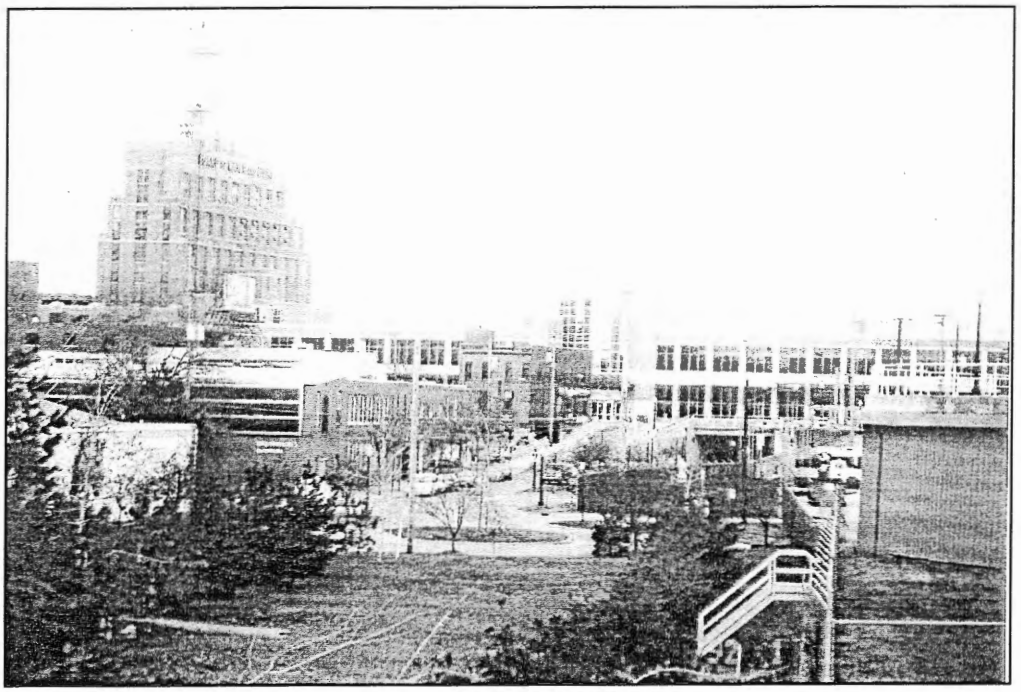

Museum Row

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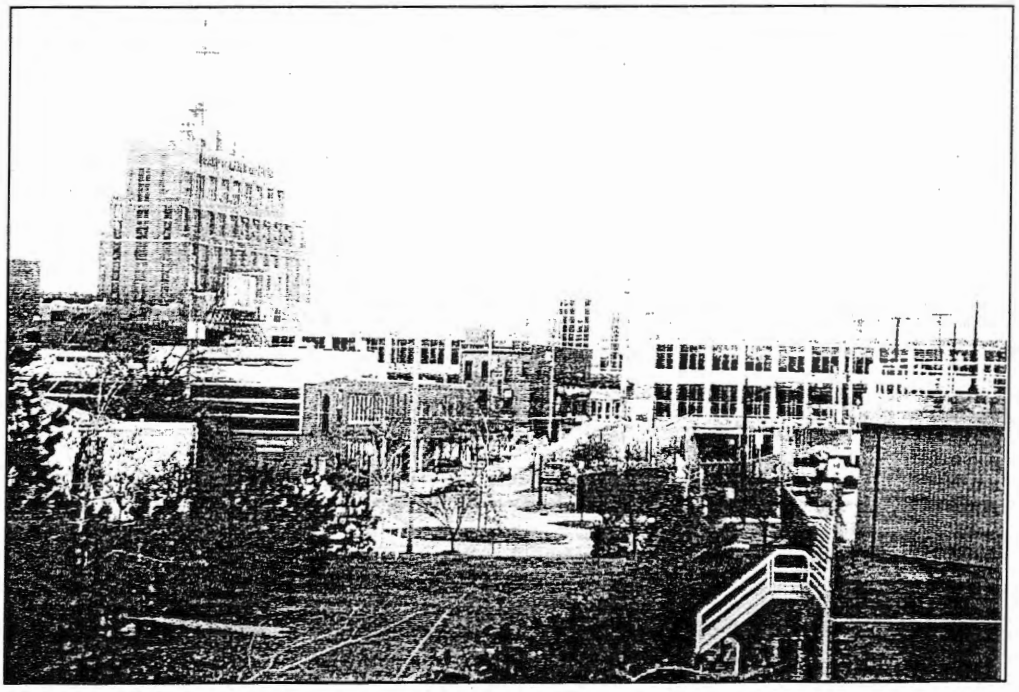

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What a Comprehensive Plan Is and Is Not

Many citizens and city officials alike do not fully understand exactly what a Comprehensive Plan consists of or what it actually does. It is often confused with other documents and regulations, especially the Zoning Ordinance. When reviewing this Plan, it is helpful to remember the following comparisons.

The Comprehensive Plan is:

- Prepared with assistance from the appointed Steering Committee and adopted by the Planning Board.
- A citizen-driven document.
- A guide or "working blue-print" to future land use, traffic circulation, and community facilities decisions.
- A guide for the Planning Board, City Council, Planning Department and Board of Appeals on zoning decisions.
- The foundation of zoning and land use within the Central area of Lansing.
- Regional, in that it considers factors beyond the study area limits.
- Comprehensive, in that it considers all appropriate land uses for the central area.

The Comprehensive Plan is not:

- A law. It is a plan.
- A zoning map. It is a guide for future zoning decisions.
- A basis for property tax assessments.
- Inflexible. It can be amended as conditions change.
- Permanent. It should be reviewed periodically.

Comparison of the Comprehensive Plan and a Zoning Ordinance

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN	ZONING ORDINANCE
Provides general policies for the City. (e.g. preserve the business district, protect natural features during development, etc.)	Sets forth zoning regulations - specific legal requirements on uses permitted on each lot, setbacks from the street and property lines, height, parking standards, etc.
Flexible, written to be able to respond to changing conditions	Rigid, requires formal legislative amendment to change
Provides data and analysis on the community, socioeconomic issues, goals, and potential actions	Deals only with physical development, how to administer the Zoning Ordinance and appeals/variances
Adopted by the Planning Board	Adopted by the City Council
Changes can be made by the Planning Board	Changes are made by City Council. Appeals and variances are made by the Board of Appeals

The Comprehensive Plan provides general direction on the City's future development pattern. The Plan also provides policies and actions for community leaders to consider in the future. Some of the Comprehensive Plan recommendations will be implemented through amendments to the Zoning Ordinance text and map. **However, the Comprehensive Plan itself does not change the Zoning Ordinance nor the zoning of any property.**

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How to Use a Comprehensive Plan

The Plan is intended as a guide for land use, urban design, development, zoning and capital improvement decisions. The Plan may be used in many different circumstances, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Reviewing development proposals. The proposal is checked to ensure that it meets the goals and objectives of the Plan.

- Reviewing rezoning requests. The criteria for rezoning should include consistency with the future land use map and the goals and objectives of the Plan.

- Viewing changes in their long range context. While zoning is present day, the Plan is longer range. Thus, while an area on the future land use map may be designated for commercial use, actual zoning to commercial use may not be appropriate until years later.

- Considering amendments to the Zoning Ordinance text. The amendments should be based on the future land use map and the goals and objectives of the Plan.

- Evaluating spending decisions on physical improvements. City leaders should consider the priorities listed in the Plan. A Capital Improvements Program should be thoroughly reviewed and updated every six (6) years and revised with individual projects annually.

- Reviewing variance requests and appeals. The Board of Appeals should check to see if the goals and objectives of the Plan would be significantly compromised by the granting of a variance or appeal.

- Maintaining the Comprehensive Plan. The Plan is intended to be a living document, not a shelf document. The Planning Board, City Council, Mayor, and City staff should have an annual meeting to review the Plan goals and objectives and the future land use map. An applicant whose project is inconsistent with the Plan must prepare an impact analysis demonstrating how the use is appropriate. If a conflicting rezoning is granted, the Plan must be amended. Amendments should also be made as new data becomes available or public attitudes change.

- Public Education. Many controversies could be avoided if everyone involved is aware of the content and designs of the Comprehensive Plan. A well-designed Plan can help steer development into appropriate areas and set in place guidelines to minimize negative aspects of proposed land use changes. The City must publicize and market the Plan. The more the public, property owners, and developers know about the Plan, the more smoothly a proposal will progress.

- Notifying Relevant Governmental Agencies. Other governmental agencies must be aware of the Plan. Developments in other cities and the plans of other agencies (such as MDOT) can have a significant impact on Lansing. In order to reduce any negative impacts from such cases, the City must let other cities and governmental agencies know of the Plan. It also helps to include their input into creating the Plan.

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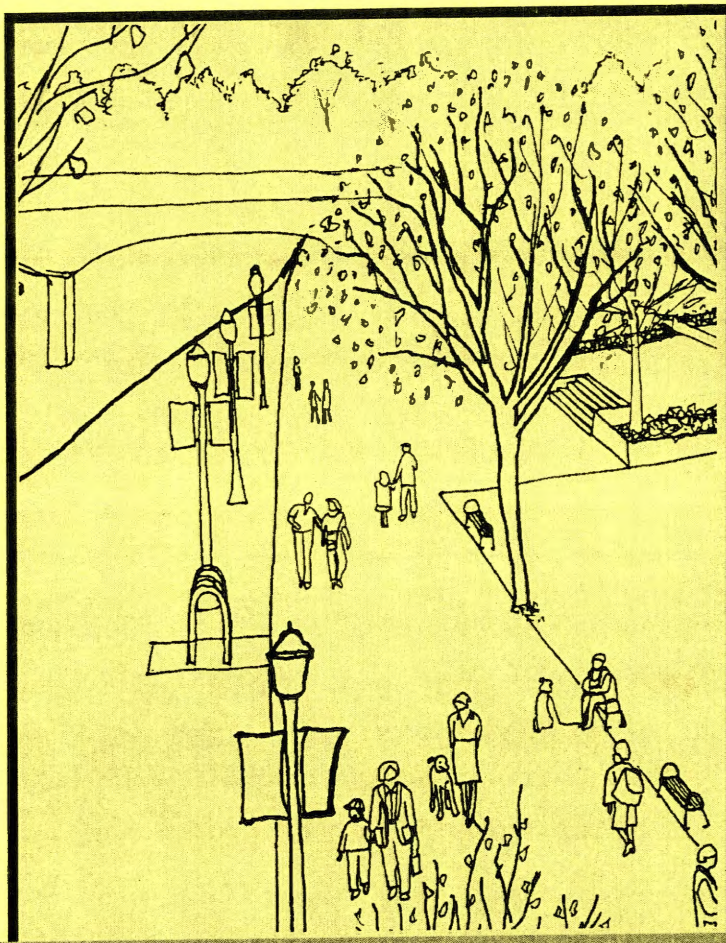
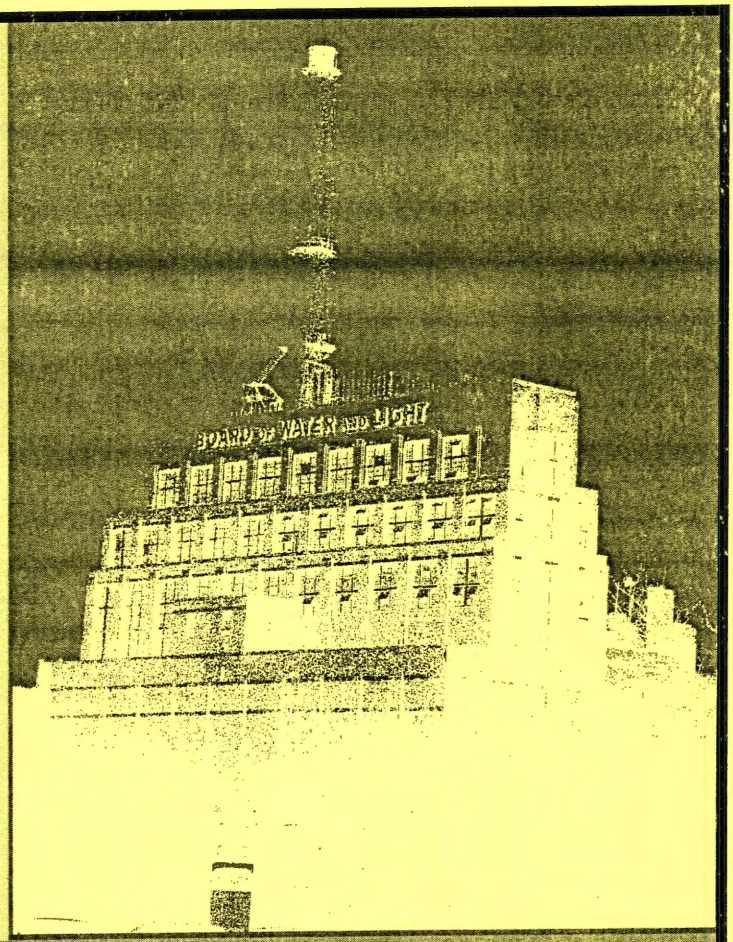
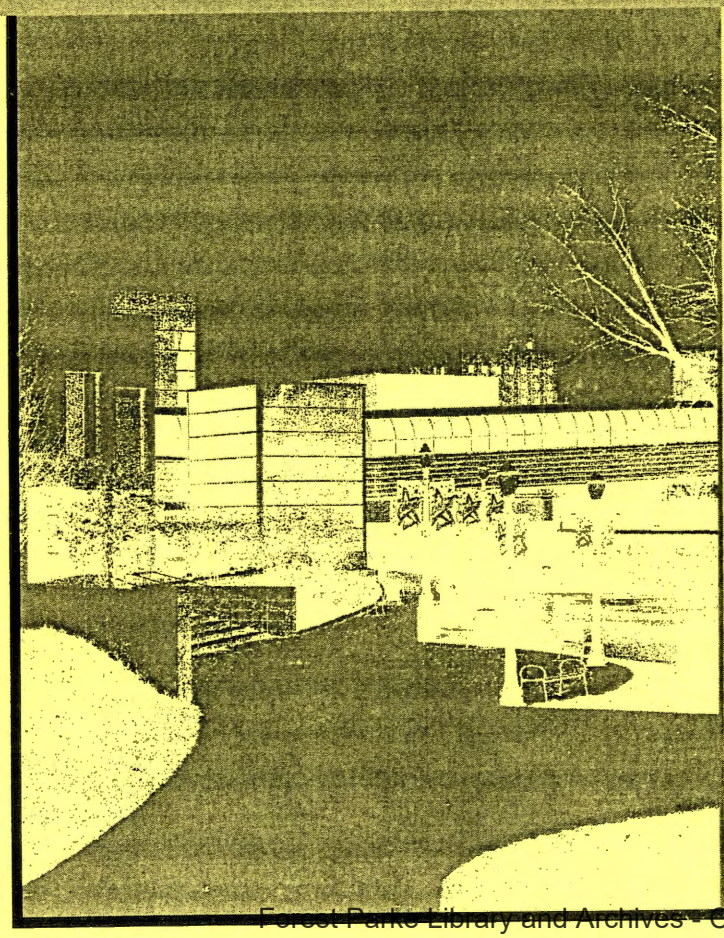




INTRODUCTION



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INTRODUCTION

Central Lansing stretches from the Turner-Dodge neighborhood on the north, to Interstate 496 on the south, and from the state government complex on the west, to a budding entertainment complex to the east. It comprises Lansing's Commerce Center, including the Washington Avenue retail area; North Lansing's Old Town commercial district; and numerous neighborhoods and districts nearby.

Two critical problems were identified: the need to intensify activity and a shortage of residential opportunities.

❖ *By providing a mixture of housing types, retail uses, and work places within walking distance, the bonds of authentic community are formed.*

In order to prosper, Central Lansing must be a place in which people choose to live, work, study, worship, and play. It must be well-maintained, pedestrian-friendly, clean, safe, and tolerant. It must be committed to preserving its heritage, protecting its natural environment, and encouraging community and family values.

Central Lansing has the fundamental elements necessary for a great urban center. It has beautiful parks and gardens. It has fine businesses, restaurants, churches, and schools. It has historic architecture and well established neighborhoods. It has the Grand River and the adjoining Riverwalk.

From Lansing's earliest times the Grand River has been essential to the City's commerce, industry, transportation, and recreation. The Riverwalk is an attraction that draws many people to Central Lansing. Its potential is far greater. Prior to the Riverwalk's creation, many businesses turned their backs to the river. This must be reversed. Our river can and should be a unifying element in Central Lansing.

However, concentrating on development of the riverfront won't be enough. To ensure a coherent and inviting downtown, more effective circulation patterns and way-finding methods must be established. The current street layout, with needlessly wide and/or one-way streets, frustrates motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, business owners, and shoppers. Similarly, the current signage is designed to efficiently direct vehicles out of Central Lansing, but does not provide direction to the many amenities in Central Lansing.

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Properly designed and coordinated signage is needed so that once inside Central Lansing a visitor will have no difficulty finding the places they want to visit. Gateways marking the entry into Central Lansing can invite visitors to orient them once they have arrived. Beckoning vistas, while pleasing the eye, can guide visitors to their destinations.

❖ *The Plan offers several solutions to improving pedestrian, vehicular, and public transit circulation downtown.*

The Plan provides an opportunity to establish Lansing as a more liveable community, with an improved pedestrian environment, and traffic flow. The revitalization process set forth in this plan requires that the leadership in Lansing manage redevelopment to ensure that it refines the City's identity and improves its image. Design review, public/private partnerships, marketing, and implementation of key projects will all help to ensure the realization of Lansing's potential to be a vital urban center.

❖ *Once the revitalization process in implemented Lansing must manage redevelopment to ensure that it refines the City's identity and improves its image.*

Study Process

Over the past year the City of Lansing conducted an intensive effort to develop the Plan. Throughout the planning process, emphasis has been placed on the need to build a consensus plan which can win the support of a broad range of community interests. Monthly meetings were held with a broad based Steering Committee, representing downtown business and residential interests appointed by the Mayor. These meetings began in September 1997. The function of the Steering Committee was to provide input and to keep the organizations they represented informed. Other interested individuals attended these meetings as well. Work sessions were conducted with City staff and department heads to receive their input.

Study Process

❖ *Steering Committee Meetings*

❖ *Work sessions with City staff*

❖ *Two public town meetings held*

❖ *Stakeholder interviews conducted*

❖ *Planning Board formal adoption process*

Two town meetings were held at the inception of the project. The format included workgroups for small scale round table discussions. The input obtained from these sessions established the basis for objectives.

Over a three day period stakeholder interviews were conducted to receive information for consideration in the Plan. Those interviewed included representatives from developers/bankers/ realtors, the Lansing Planning Board, Colleges/Libraries, MSU, local merchants, neighborhood leaders, Lansing City Council and Old Town Main Street.

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An extensive outreach effort was conducted by the City Planning Office with presentations to the following groups:

- North Lansing Kiwanis Club
- Lansing 2000
- Downtown Merchants
- Old Town Main Street Board
- City Council Committee on Development and Planning
- Principal Shopping District Board
- City Administration Operational Cabinet
- Greater Lansing Board of Realtors
- Representatives of Neighborhood Organizations
- Lansing Entertainment Public Facilities (LEPFA) Board
- Board of Water and Light
- Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce

The Steering Committee and the Planning Board both reviewed and revised the Plan before its adoption.

Using the gathered information the consultant assembled a rough draft of the Plan. The Steering Committee reviewed and revised the rough draft. The final draft of the Plan was forwarded to the Planning Board, which held a public hearing on June 16, 1998. The Planning Board reviewed and revised the Plan, and held a public informational session at its meeting on March 16, 1999. The Board made further revisions to the Plan before its adoption on August 17, 1999.

The process of analyzing and making recommendations for the downtown area is described in **Section I. Section II** describes the design studies which were conducted to understand existing land uses and potential land use focal points, vehicular and pedestrian circulation patterns, development opportunities and constraints, significant buildings and landmarks, and the open space/riverfront network.

Summary recommendations from a market analysis which was conducted as part of the planning process are set forth in **Section III**. Based on this information, conceptual development plans were prepared, culminating in the Central Lansing Comprehensive Plan which is described in **Section IV**. This section is the heart of the project which expresses a future land use plan with design and circulation recommendations. **Section V** discusses each Central Lansing district, the riverfront, and the Washington Avenue corridor in detail, and makes recommendations for their future development. **Section VI** presents implementation strategies which will ensure the recommendations contained in this plan will come to life.

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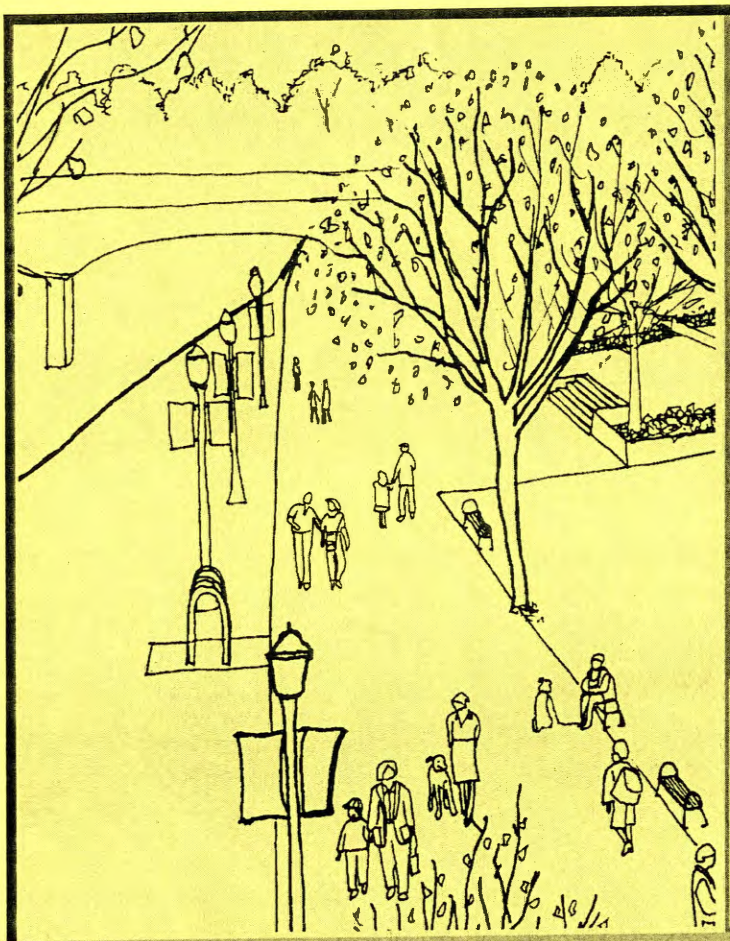
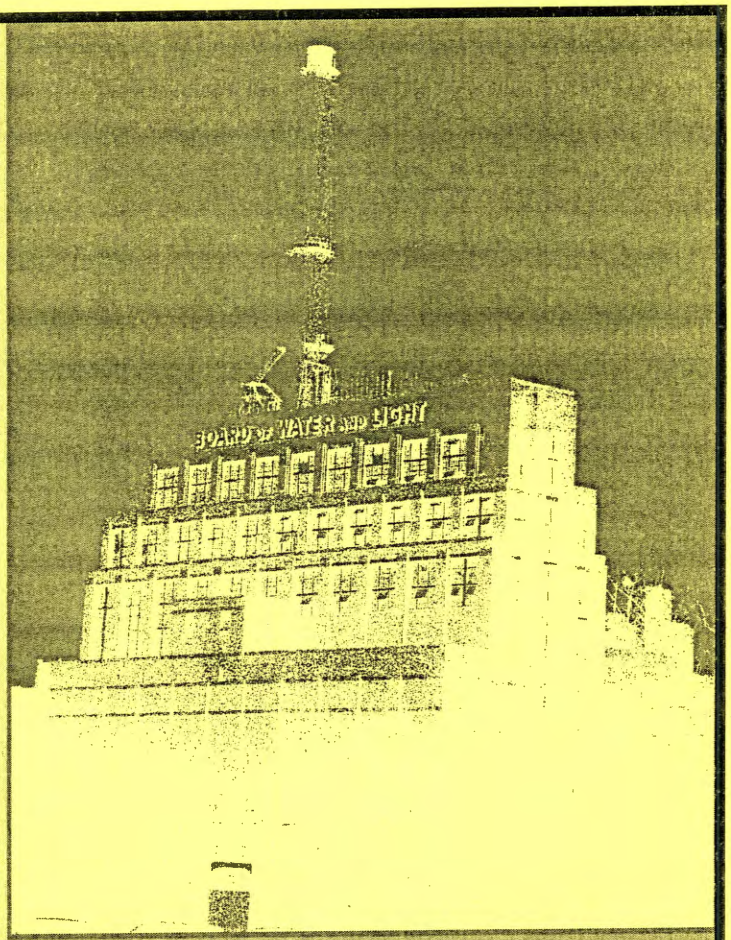
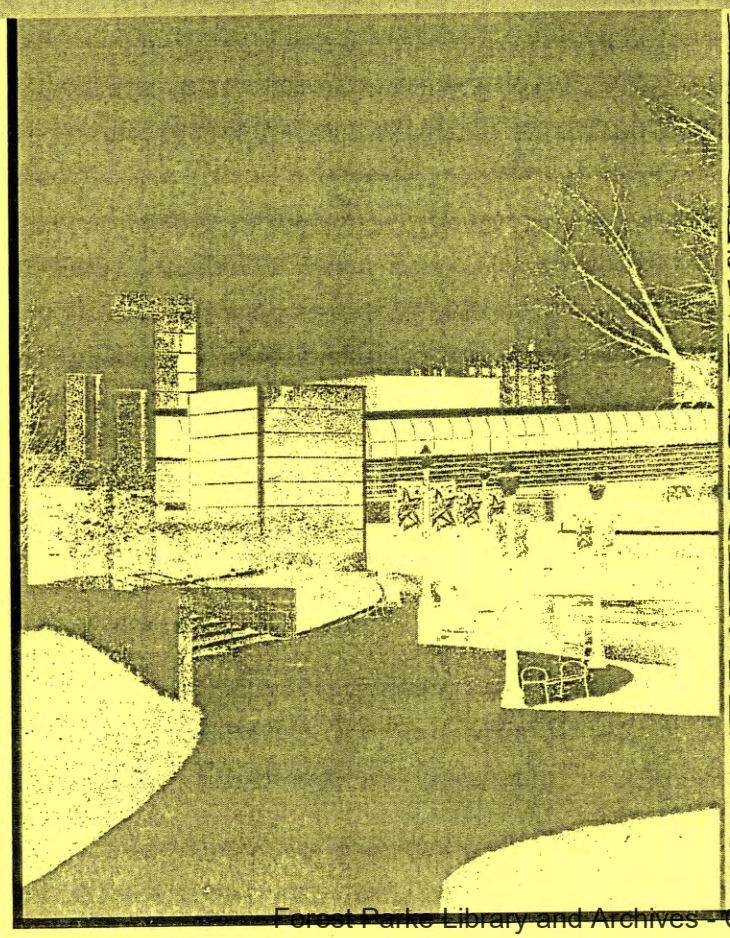
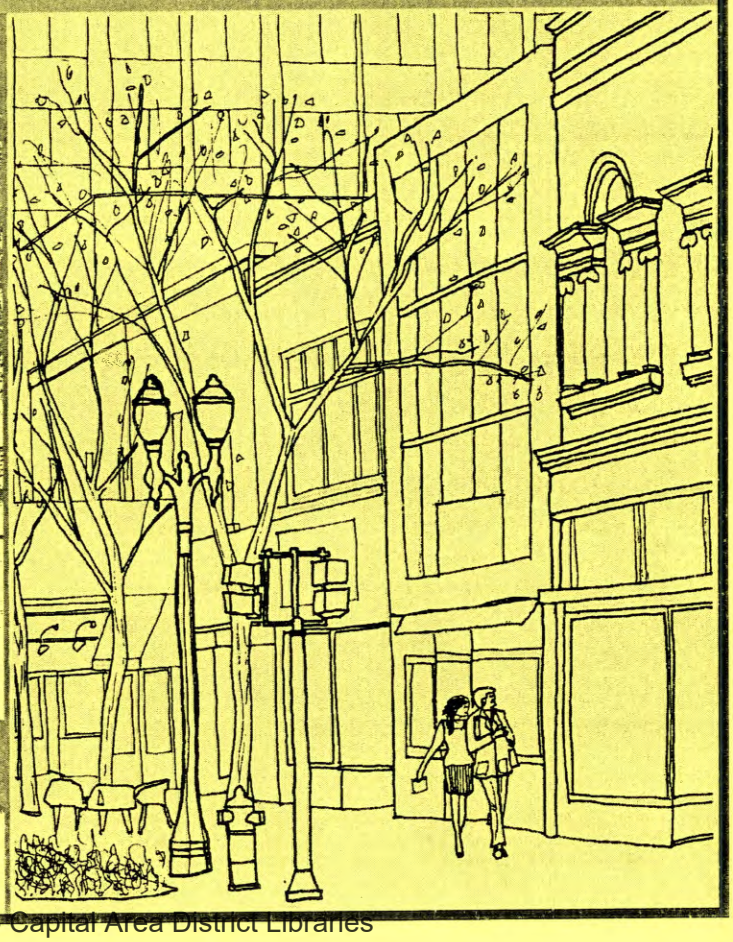




Section I - DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES





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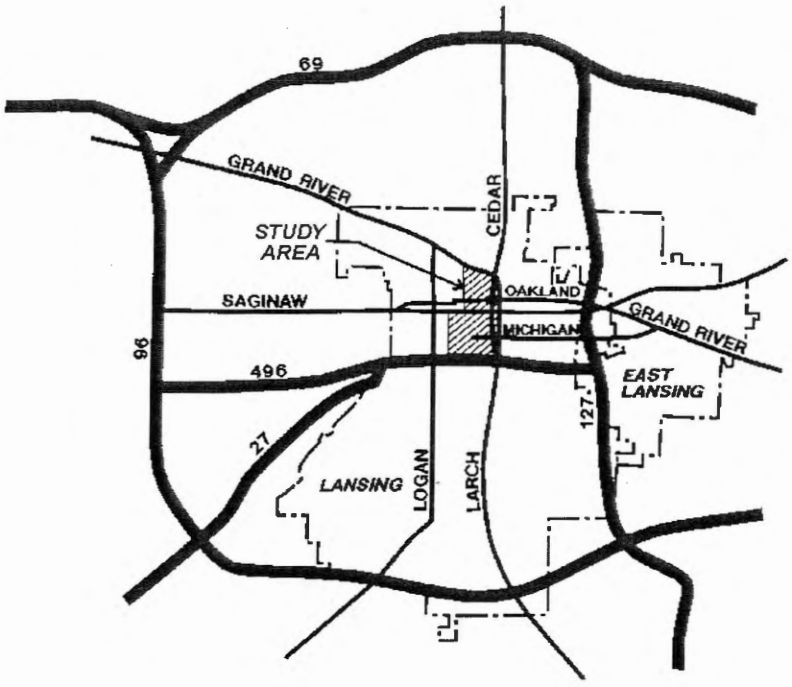
SECTION I
DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

The Study Area

The study area is bounded to the south by Interstate 496, to the west by Capitol Avenue and where it jogs four blocks west to incorporate a majority of the state complex. The eastern boundary is generally defined by the rail line until it crosses North Street, which establishes the northern limits of the study area. The area is comprised of all forms and configurations of land use. At a glance the road network is a simplistic grid pattern, but taking a closer look a greater challenge lies in the one-way street system. Bisecting the area is the Grand River which offers a mixture of opportunities and constraints .



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Regional Context

Lansing, the capital city of Michigan, is located in the Clinton-Eaton-Ingham Tri-County Region near the center of the lower peninsula of Michigan. To the east are the fast growing Meridian Township, Okemos, and the City of East Lansing. To the north, west, and south are emerging communities such as DeWitt, Delta and Delhi Townships. With the help of I-96, I-69, I-496, U.S. 127, U.S. 27, and state highways 99, 43, and 143, other regional centers in the state such as Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, Flint and Metro Detroit are only one hour away. North of the study area, air transportation is provided through Capitol City Airport.

Three major employers in the area (General Motors Corporation, Michigan State University, and the State of Michigan) provide thousands of jobs for Lansing residents and have influenced dramatic changes in development patterns in the area.

Lansing is a regional center for banking, finance, and commerce with approximately fourteen banks in the downtown area. Regional educational institutions (Michigan State University, Lansing Community College, Davenport College, and Thomas Cooley Law School), hospitals (Sparrow Health Systems and Ingham Regional Medical Center), cultural attractions (Impression Five Science Museum, Boarshead and Riverwalk Theaters, Wharton Center for Performing Arts, Kresge Art Museum, Michigan Historical Museum, R.E. Olds Transportation Museum, Lansing Art Gallery, and Lansing City Market), and sports venues (Oldsmobile Park Stadium, Jack Breslin Student Event Center, Spartan Stadium, and Munn Ice Arena) are nearby for residents, employees and visitors to enjoy.

Development Plan Objectives

The goal of the Plan is to enliven Central Lansing by creating a dynamic and vibrant area of commercial, retail, arts, entertainment, recreation, waterfront, educational, governmental, and residential activities. This will encourage public and private investment and reinvestment and attract residents, consumers, businesses, employees and visitors.

To create a dynamic and vibrant area we must:

- **Encourage development and redevelopment, both commercial and residential:**
  - by developing activity centers
  - by encouraging adaptive reuse of existing structures
  - by preserving the built environment

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- **Encourage and strengthen visual, institutional, social, and transit linkages:**
  - between different activity centers
  - between activity centers and neighborhoods
  - between institutions, activity centers, and neighborhoods
- **Preserve architectural and cultural resources:**
  - by protecting residential neighborhoods (especially those adjacent to commercial areas)
  - by implementing design guidelines that preserve the look and feel of neighborhoods and commercial areas
  - by supporting the arts and other cultural amenities
- **Encourage more people to live in Central Lansing:**
  - by increasing the diversity of the residents, both cultural and economic
  - by encouraging housing that is attractive to diverse incomes
  - by adaptive reuse of existing structures
  - by changing existing zoning codes that discourage mixed uses
- **Enhance & promote the vitality and beauty of Central Lansing:**
  - by creating multiple gateways that engage the senses (visual, auditory, olfactory, tactile, etc.) and create a sense of place
  - by creating attractive and stimulating outdoor spaces that attract people
  - by public relations and marketing
  - by capitalizing on the Grand River
- **Provide for ease of transport throughout the area:**
  - by anticipating future needs
  - by making it convenient and enjoyable to use multiple modes of transportation (i.e. automobiles, mass transit, bicycles, and pedestrian)
  - by providing for the parking needs of visitors, customers, and employees

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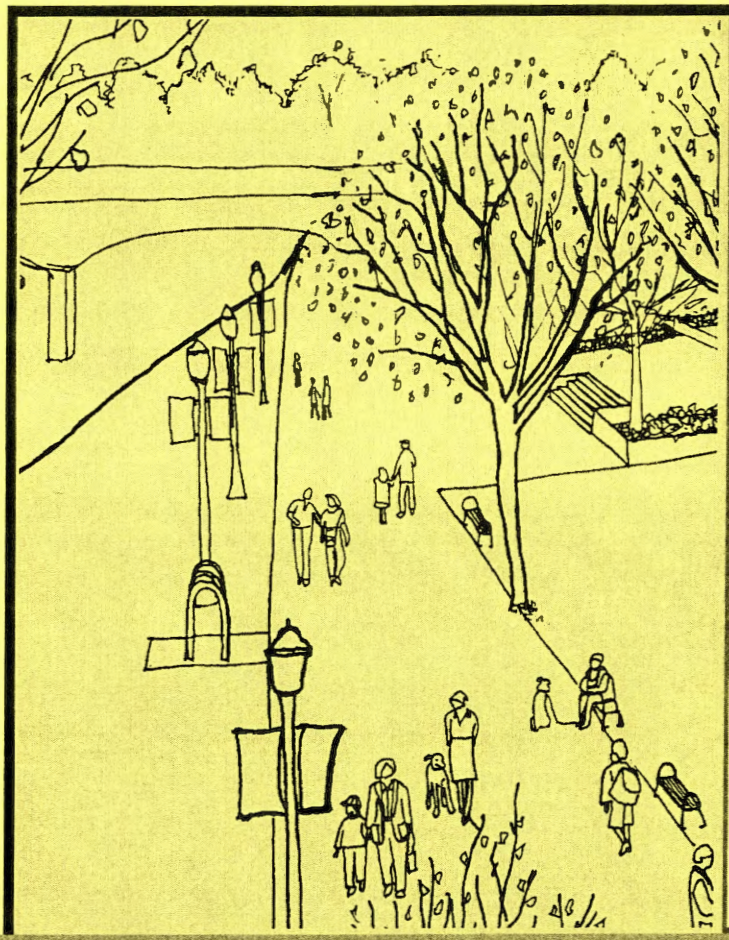
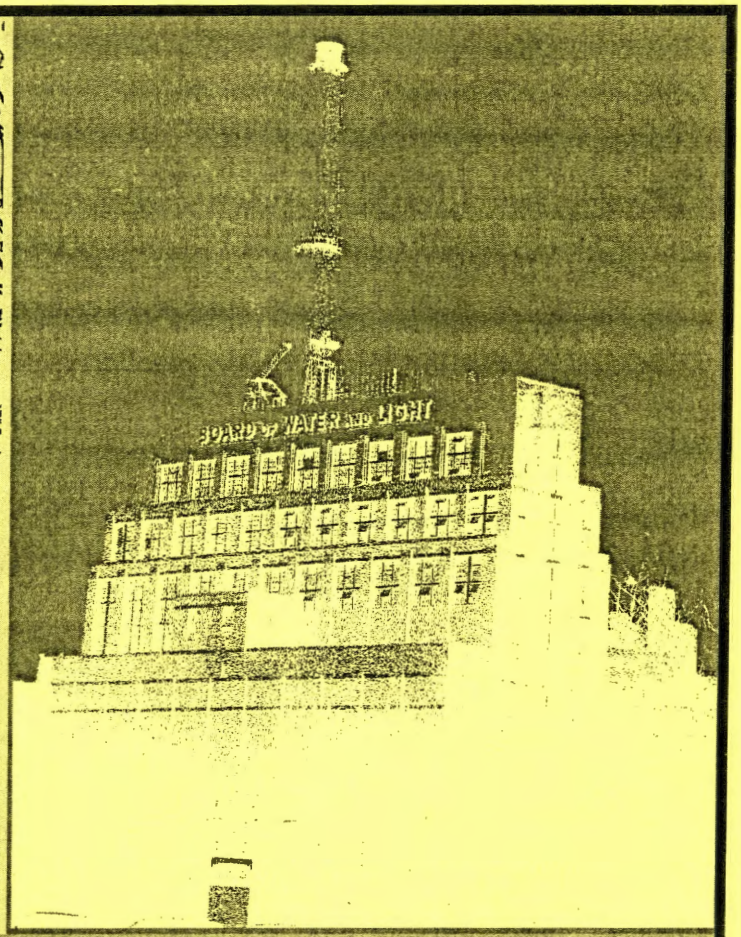
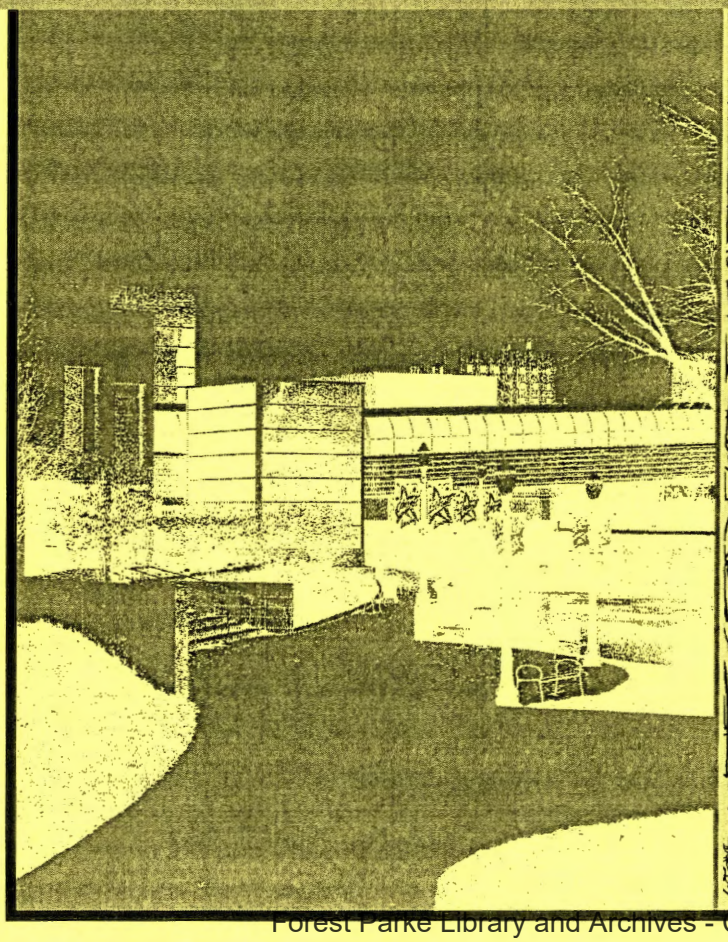




Section II - DEVELOPMENT ANALYSIS



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SECTION II
DEVELOPMENT ANALYSIS

Existing Land Use

This section presents a series of analysis diagrams and preliminary design studies which examined specific issues within the downtown area, and assisted in developing alternative solutions.

The Existing Land Use map illustrates the present uses of land within the Central Lansing study area. These uses are broken down into very specific categories. Generally the map identifies single family residential, multiple family residential, commercial, industrial, and vacant uses within the district.

As expected, Central Lansing consists of primarily commercial and office land uses. The highest concentration of residential land uses are north of Saginaw and along the southern boundary of the district along Interstate 496. For the purposes of description the study area is broken into three sectors.

Sector 1 has a healthy mixture of commercial and residential uses. The commercial core is along Grand River Avenue, and still contains some vacant land available for development. The residential land uses, though somewhat scattered, create a good base for future growth. Along Washington Avenue, many older homes have been converted to retail or office uses. Industrial land is located along the rail line and the Grand River.

The more established commercial area is found in Sector 2 which has a minimal amount of large vacant lots. The commercial and office uses in this area have resulted in an abundance of underutilized land for parking lots and structures. The Grand River is most visually and physically accessible in this area and is utilized as a resource to the community.

Sector 3 is comprised primarily of offices and supportive services, which also includes large parking lots, for the City and the state. The encroachment of these uses into residential neighborhoods can be seen in the northwest corner where seven blocks of residential structures are predominately converted to retail or office.

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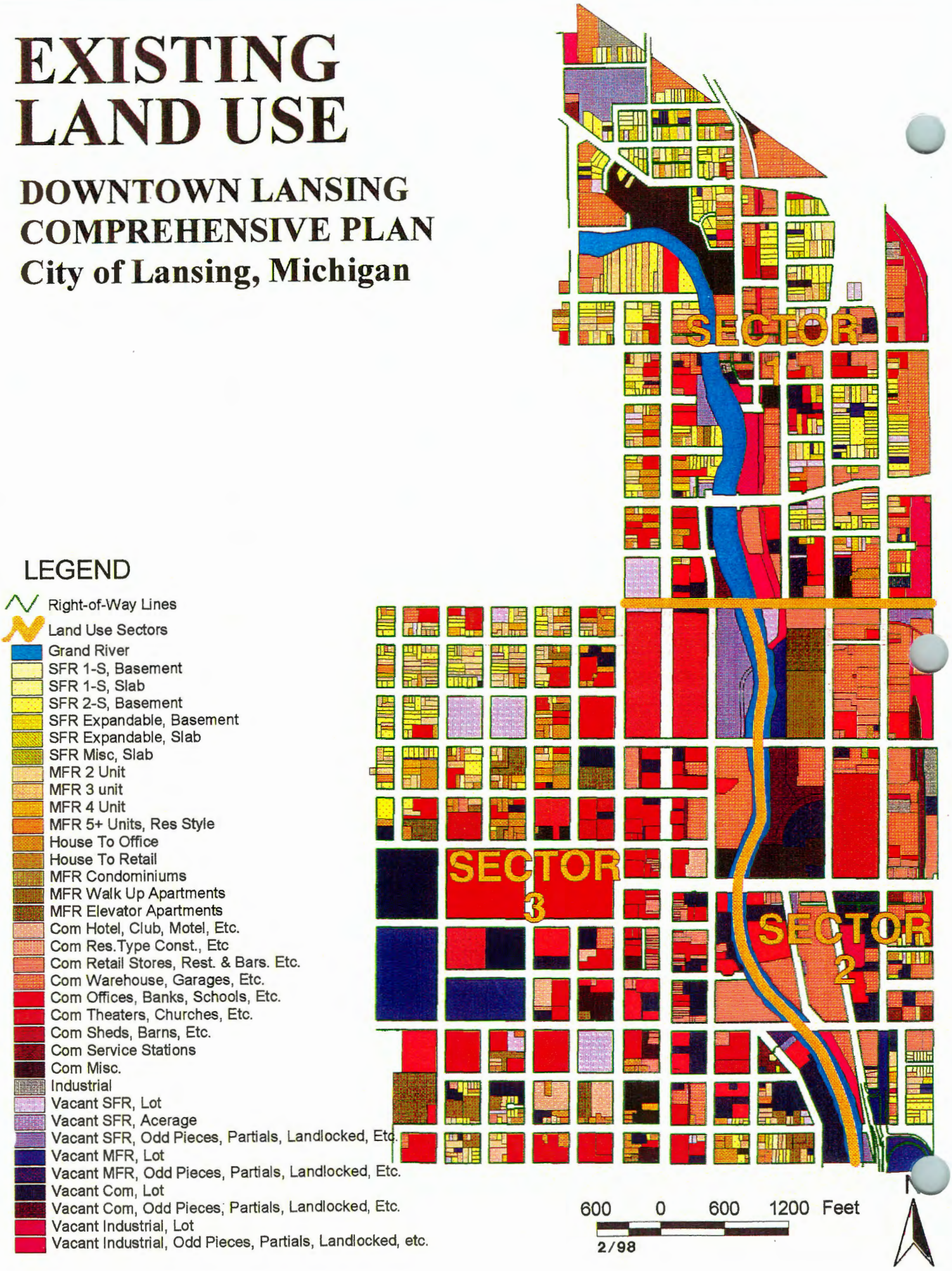
EXISTING LAND USE

DOWNTOWN LANSING COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

City of Lansing, Michigan



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Development Opportunities and Constraints

As existing land uses in the downtown were surveyed and recorded, a number of development opportunities and constraints for the area became evident. The Opportunities and Constraints Diagram identifies key land use issues that were integral in establishing the goals and objectives of the Plan which are further carried out in the Central Lansing Comprehensive Plan as described in Section IV.

Opportunity Areas:

- *Washington Avenue Retail*
- *Entertainment Complex*
- *Old Town District*
- *Capitol Complex*
- *The Riverfront*
- *Residential Development*
- *Transitional Zones*
- *Lansing Community College*
- *Architectural Character*

The Diagram uses asterisks to designate development opportunities and major activity centers. Because of their location and visibility, development of these sites would have a major impact on downtown's image and economy. Each benefits from proximity to a strong land use or significant public amenity, and is considered to have redevelopment potential. The three primary activity centers are designated by color, and labeled as State Offices, Entertainment and Old Town. The transitional areas which require special attention are also labeled. Visual and physical access opportunities are identified to establish key corridors in the district.

Constraints for the City generally consist of visual and physical barriers between prime opportunities. Large buildings along the riverfront block views and access to the river and prevent capitalizing on the natural asset of the Grand River. Existing one-way street patterns impede accessibility for motorists to the key development areas.

The opportunities and constraints can be summarized into the following areas:

Washington Avenue Retail

The single most important element in any downtown is its "main street," the street or crossroads where retail activity is concentrated. As a traditional retail center, Washington Avenue offers goods and services for employees, residents, visitors and patrons of the Commerce Center and Capitol Complex.

Competition from malls mandates that special attention be given to the physical appearance and convenience of the Washington Square Retail District. Uninterrupted, high-quality street level retail in an attractive setting is essential.

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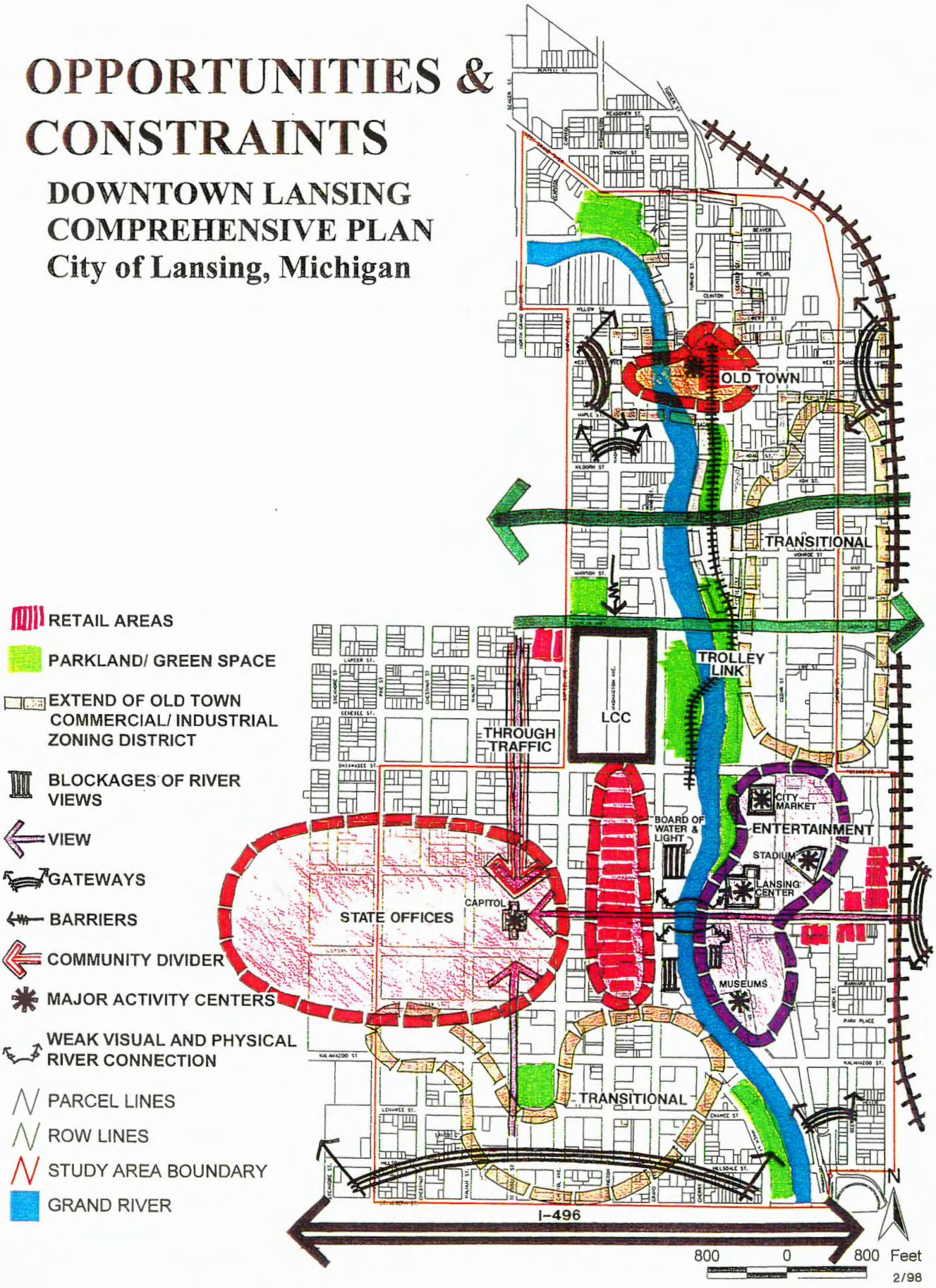
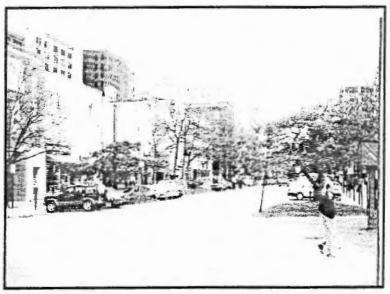
OPPORTUNITIES & CONSTRAINTS

DOWNTOWN LANSING COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

City of Lansing, Michigan

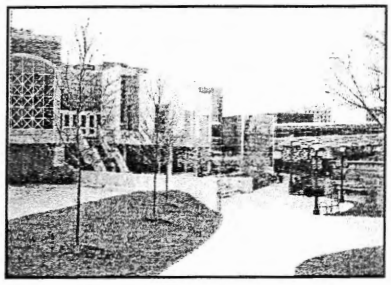




Washington Avenue - Lansing Retail Main Street

The retail area includes Washington Avenue between Kalamazoo Street and Michigan Avenue and is characterized by historic architecture, a variety of restaurants and many specialty retail shops. The district distinguishes itself with brick pavers, landscaping, street trees, lighting, on-street perpendicular parking and a charming traffic circle with traditional traffic lighting at the Michigan Avenue crossroad. The primary issue in the Washington Avenue District is the high potential for infill development of vacant store fronts and upper level office or residential space.

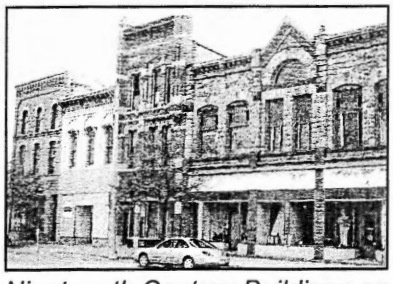
Washington extending north of Michigan Avenue to Shiawassee Street is a pedestrian avenue mall fronted by office buildings. The mall is intended to serve as a gathering place for workers during the week and a prime location for special events on the weekend. Improved connections are needed.



Entertainment uses generate future development

Entertainment Complex

Lansing has a burgeoning entertainment complex located north and south of Michigan Avenue, and extending to the eastern edge of the Central Lansing planning area. The complex currently consists of museums, a minor league baseball stadium, a convention center and a farmers market. These uses have generated a need for supportive services such as restaurants and hotels to accommodate patrons of these facilities. The challenge is to direct future entertainment development to these areas and ensure a business environment which will thrive while avoiding land use conflicts.



Nineteenth Century Buildings on West Grand River Avenue

Old Town

This historic commercial district creates a second "main street" retail component for the City. Old Town is generally located along Grand River Avenue where it intersects with Turner Street and Center Street. It has become a hub for "alternative" specialty retail such as art, photography, sculpting and furniture.

Old Town has significant potential for additional retail, and still greater potential for residential development. Its prime location on the river and River Trail provides access and attractive amenities for patrons and residents.

Old Town certainly has developed a character in its own right, yet gateway features should be incorporated to reinforce a sense of place for the district. Improvements such as streetscape design and facade improvements are being installed to establish a distinguishing atmosphere for the area, while encouraging a complementary interface with adjacent residential areas. Existing land uses which conflict with the developing main street must be phased out to encourage commercial and residential development.

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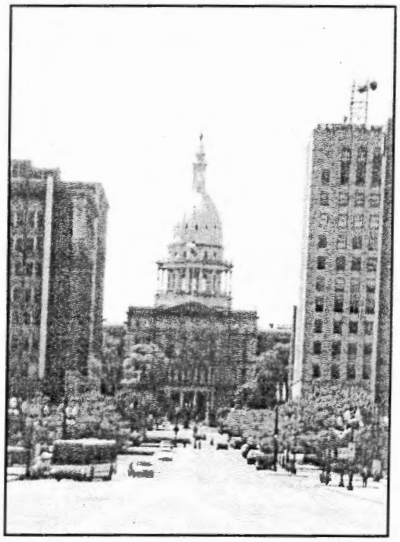
Capitol Complex

As Michigan's capital, Lansing has the responsibility to provide adequate services and development potential for all the state department offices. The City must also provide opportunities for recruitment and retention of other related business that wish to locate their "headquarters" in the capital city. For these reasons, the capitol complex must be encouraged to flourish. However, this must occur within defined boundaries in order to prevent these uses from sprawling into adjacent activity centers or neighborhoods which may jeopardize their vitality and stability.



State Capitol Building

The Riverfront

One of the City's greatest challenges is to battle the historic development pattern which turned its back on the river. The location of buildings on existing riverbanks have cut off portions of the city from physical and visual access to the river. Key areas where this situation exists are indicated on the Opportunities and Constraints Map.

Every vital community possesses at least one public space that brings the surrounding community together, also called a "seam." The riverfront is perhaps the City's greatest - and most underutilized - asset. It has amazing potential to be a very special "people place" which will create a seam for Central Lansing. The existing riverfront park system should be expanded to create a complete connection along the Grand River for recreational use, to provide links to the adjacent land uses in the downtown and nearby neighborhoods, and to serve as a destination route between the different activity centers and districts in the City.

Old Town Riverfront

Residential Development

The vitality of a downtown rests in part on the round-the-clock presence of downtown residents. In Lansing, the combined amenities of the riverfront and proximity to downtown's retail, cultural and employment offerings create exciting opportunities for future residential development as well as the existing stable neighborhoods within and adjacent to the study area. A variety of housing types should be encouraged in Central Lansing, particularly in the upper stories of commercial buildings and along the riverfront.

Riverfront greenways should be expanded

Some neighborhoods in Central Lansing are disjointed due to land use conflicts, circulation constraints and the perception of crime. The delineation of certain districts will define specific non–residential use development to allow for the remaining areas to develop into residential neighborhoods.

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Transitional Zones

Transitional zones consist of a mixture of residential, office, commercial and industrial uses. There is a tendency toward neglect in transitional areas because of their exclusion from a core area. Lansing has the potential to create a core area out of each transitional area, because many supplemental services are needed in Central Lansing.

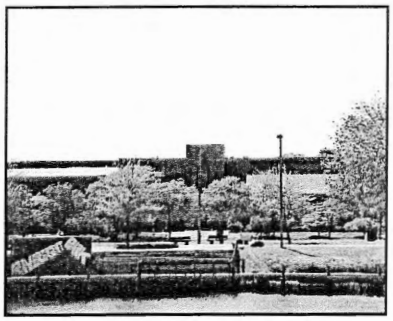
The transitional area south of the capitol complex consists primarily of supportive office uses. The location of these uses is based on their proximity to the state offices and I-496.

The transitional zone in the northeast area of Central Lansing is a mixture of residential, commercial, and industrial uses, generally located along Cedar and Larch Streets.

Careful planning in these areas will allow these uses to thrive together. A key focus should be expansion and improvement of the residential uses.

Lansing Community College

The College enrollment is approximately 15,900 a year. These students could contribute a great deal more to the vitality of the City. However, as the campus was developed, a barrier was constructed at Saginaw Street which discourages north-south movement. Improved connections are needed to encourage movement, and off-campus Central Lansing services should be more effectively marketed to students.



Lansing Community College Riverfront

Architectural Character

Architectural character is a unifying element which establishes the atmosphere and prestige of a community. Lansing possesses the strength of architectural, historical and cultural significance which can be seen in many of the existing commercial office and residential structures.

Most noteworthy, of course, is the State Capitol building whose strong presence creates an anchor for the Capitol District. Similarly, the Ottawa Street Board of Water and Light power plant represents the history and stability of the downtown. Beautifully designed older homes and the Lansing City Market remind us that Lansing can be a prime location for residential development.

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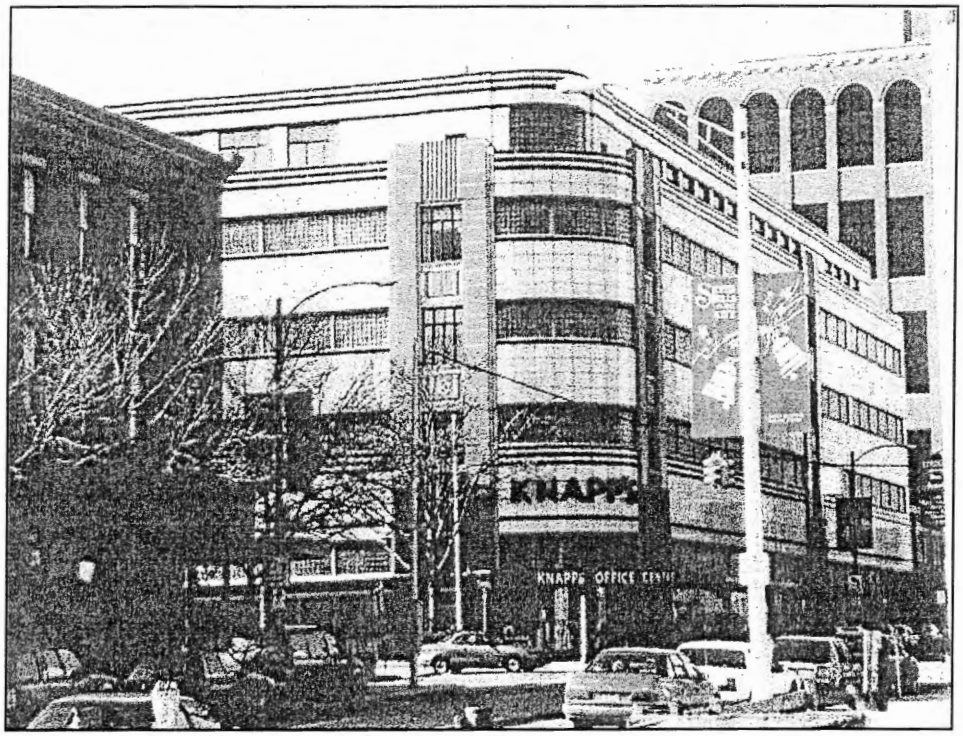
In order to maintain the same scale and quality architectural character in the downtown, existing buildings must be maintained and reused for purposes which will continue to serve as historic landmarks for the City.



Knapp's Building

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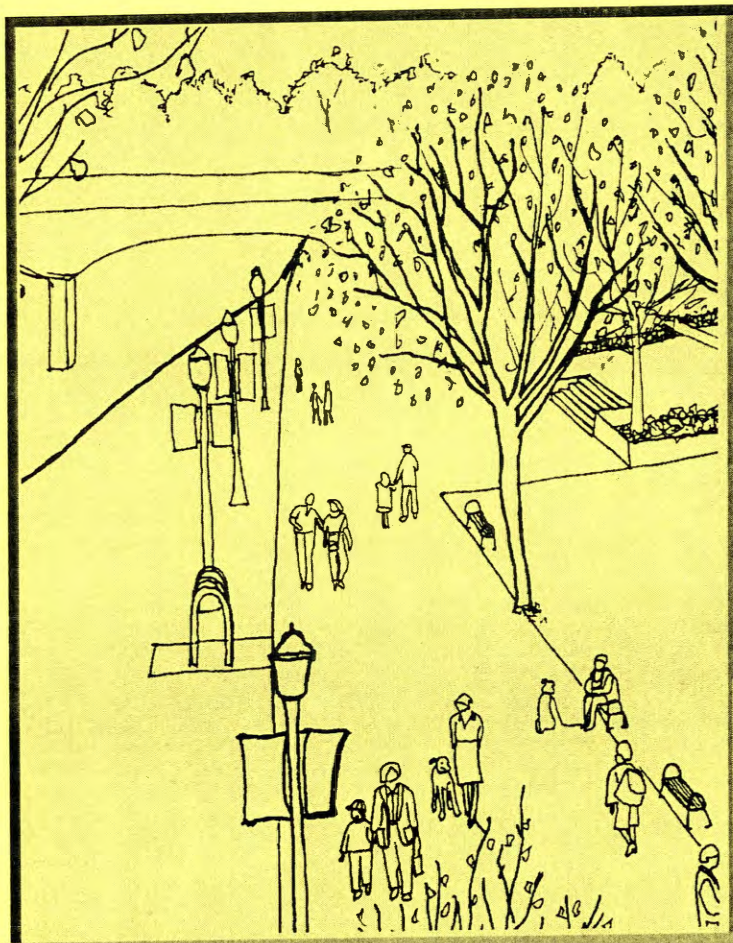
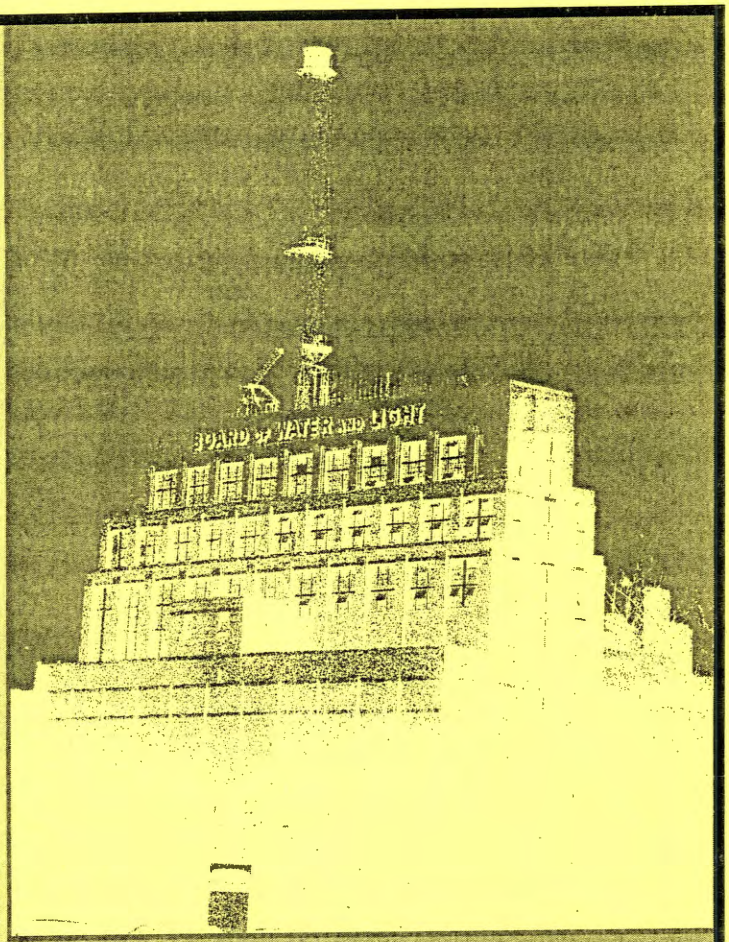
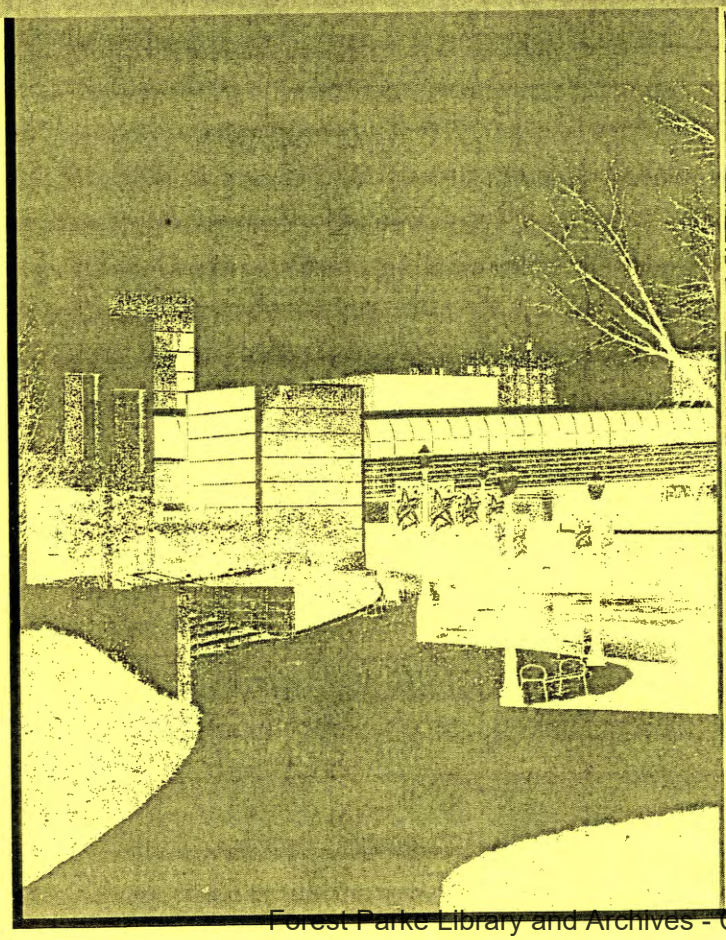
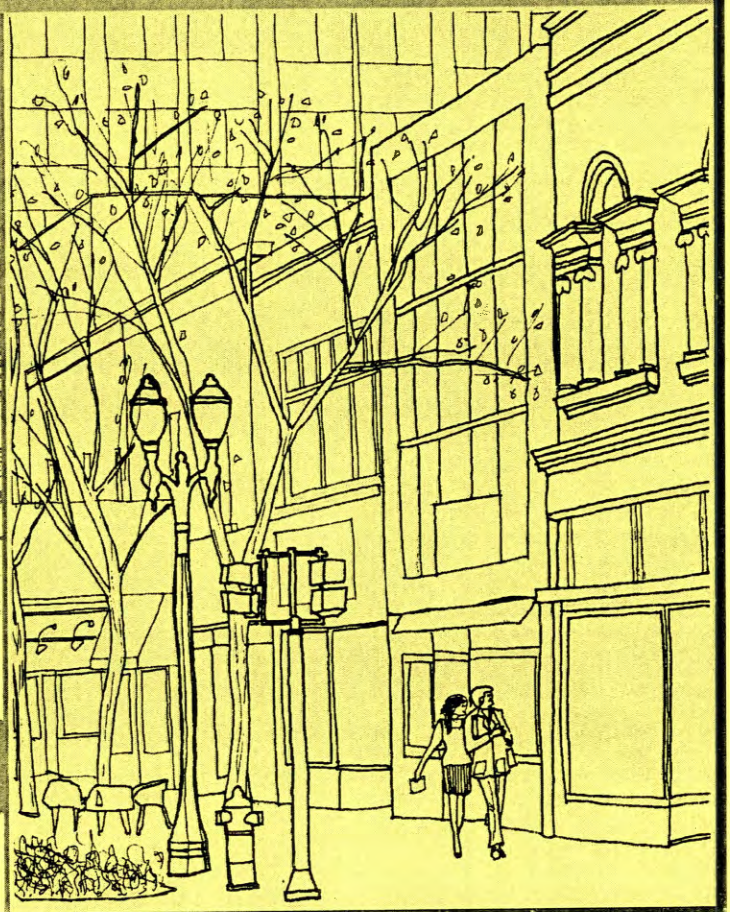




Section III - MARKET ANALYSIS





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SECTION III
MARKET ANALYSIS

The Central Lansing Comprehensive Planning process includes a market analysis to guide and support the recommendations to the future land use of the study area. A market analysis examines the market conditions and retail trends at a given point in time. Thus, as the market grows or changes, a re-evaluation of the conclusions and recommendations of this study may be appropriate.

This section summarizes the findings and conclusions of the market analysis. The complete analysis was prepared as a technical document under separate cover, and is now the property of the City of Lansing Principal Shopping District.

Key Findings

The following are the key findings of this study:

Trade Area Residential Characteristics:

- *25,695 Residents*
- *61.5% White*
- *10,550 Households*
- *2.39 Average Persons Per Household*
- *33% of Households Have Children*

1. ***Convenience-Oriented Retail Area***. Lansing's Principal Shopping District is currently shopped as a convenience area. Patrons of downtown Lansing use the area for shopping, restaurants, and services because it is located close to their home or business. This convenience orientation limits the trade area extent of the downtown area and results in a high leakage of dollars to other shopping areas.

2. ***Potential for Destination Orientation***. The potential for destination retailers, restaurants, or services in the downtown Lansing area is as yet unrealized. Entertainment destinations located east of the Grand River continue to generate traffic, but this traffic does not flow in great numbers into the remainder of the downtown or the Old Town district.

3. ***Potential of Additional Businesses***. Downtown Lansing is capturing only a small portion of its market potential with the current tenant mix. There is potential to convert current non-shoppers of downtown Lansing to shoppers through business repositioning and recruitment.

4. ***Trade Area Demographic Characteristics***. While the residential demographic characteristics in the primary trade area are currently unfavorable, future housing construction, daytime employment, tourists, students and other Lansing area residents will help to support additional retail.

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5. ***Room for Retail Growth***. There is room for future retail growth throughout the study area, particularly the Old Town District, which offers growth potential for both incubator businesses and convenience-oriented services.

6. ***Strong Competition in Neighboring Trade Areas***. Central Lansing faces strong retail competition throughout the metro area which affects its potential for retail growth.

Conclusions

Recommended Additional Retail Space

Central Lansing currently offers approximately 125,500 square feet of retail sales area. The existing tenant mix offers primarily convenience-oriented goods and services. Thus, there is market potential for a hub of destination tenants to attract shoppers.

While the demographic characteristics of the residents currently living in the trade area limit retail growth, future residential housing, the daytime worker population, tourists, college students and Lansing area residents from beyond the defined trade area help to support the potential for additional retail. Recommended additional retail space for the downtown Lansing study area is outlined below.

The proposed added retail space can be obtained by new construction, by converting existing unused space to retail space (possibly the second floor in some areas), or by converting existing office space to retail space.

Some of the current retail, especially restaurants and used-merchandise stores, should be either upgraded or converted to offer expanded variety. While this would not constitute additional retail space, the converted space would add additional retail options to the current retail inventory. Further, retail replacing the existing vacant space intended for retail is not included in the calculation of additional retail space.

With the expanded tenant mix, downtown Lansing will become more effective in serving the existing residential base and current retail users. The recommended additional retail, particularly in Old Town, would encourage residential development to support more retail in the future.

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Other Uses Recommended:

- *Residential*
- *Quality Limited Service Motel*
- *Professional Offices*
- *High Technology Park*

Other Uses Recommended

In addition to the recommended retail space, the following other uses are supportable in the downtown Lansing study area:

1. ***Residential***. The development and acceptance of residential growth in Old Town, as well as on the periphery of the study area have demonstrated a market for housing within Central Lansing. The recommended retail and services (such as an expanded City Market or grocery store, and the pharmacy in the Commerce Center or Old Town) will help support the development of new residences.

   Further, having these services conveniently located in the area will help to attract additional residential development, especially north of the Commerce Center, in Old Town, west of the Lansing Community College and along the Grand River.

   Up to 200 single-family detached housing and 1,000 multi-family attached units are supportable within Central Lansing, in addition to the existing neighborhoods within and adjacent to the study area.

2. ***Quality Limited Service Motel***. Currently the only motel/hotel option in downtown Lansing is the Radisson Hotel on Grand Avenue. The Radisson is a full-service hotel featuring a restaurant and bar, and fulfills a needed role in the downtown area. However, those not wanting or needing a full-service hotel must find lodging outside of the downtown area. A limited-service motel, such as the Courtyard by Marriott, Hampton Inn or Comfort Suites would offer the option to those visiting the Lansing area to stay downtown, near the State Capitol, museums, ballpark and Federal/State Court buildings. Lower-end motels, such as Red Roof Inn, Motel 6 or Budgetel, are not recommended for Central Lansing.

   Typically hotels develop in clusters - where one unit locates, so does the competition. As a result, greater Lansing has ended up with two major hotel hubs, at Interstate 96 and Okemos Road to the east and the other at Saginaw and Interstate 96 to the west. Recently, however, hotel chains such as Marriott Courtyard and Hampton Inn have recognized the untapped potential in urban locations and have started building in central areas.

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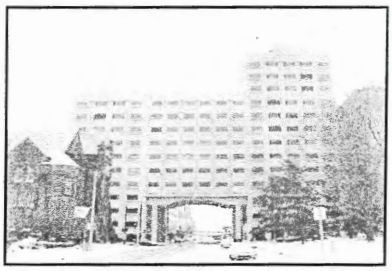
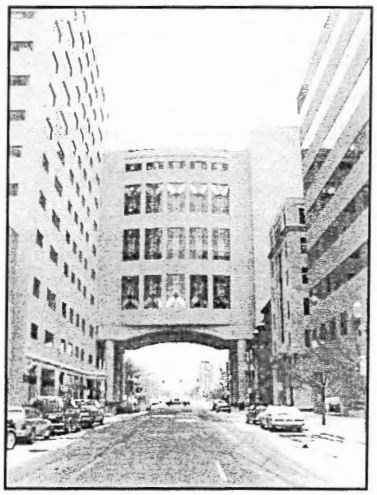
3. ***Professional Offices***. Two downtown buildings on Capitol Avenue have been combined into a new office building for the Michigan House of Representatives. These new offices have displaced some private sector office space, creating a need for the development of additional "Class A & B" office space near the State Capitol.



House Office Building

The southwest portion of the study area bounded by Kalamazoo Street on the north, Washington Avenue on the east, I-496 on the south and Pine Street on the west has developed into small professional offices, particularly for those organizations and businesses which desire locations near the State Capitol for lobbying purposes. This area offers easy access to Interstate 496 and the State Capitol, and should continue to be targeted for office uses. The construction of the State Circuit Courts in this area should aid in the further development of the area.

4. ***High Technology Park***. The combination of Lansing Community College within Central Lansing, General Motors to the south, and Sparrow Hospital to the east lends support to the development of a High Technology Park within the Central Lansing study area. Such a development would best be located east of Larch between Michigan and Kalamazoo.



Tenant Type Rationale

The market study offers recommendations for additional retail space, based on the demographics of Central Lansing's residents, students, workers, and visitors. **These recommendations, while numerous, do not cover all possibilities for Central Lansing businesses, and are no substitute for the creativity of local entrepreneurs.** They are presented for consideration among other concepts for developing or renovating retail space.

Apparel: *There is sufficient market potential to support 10,500 square feet of additional apparel, shoes and accessories.*

As of this study there are approximately 11,900 square feet of apparel retail space offered in the Central Lansing study area. Of this, most space is evenly divided between women's and men's apparel (3,250 and 3,000 square feet, respectively), with 3,150 square feet of jewelry and 2,500 square feet of shoes and accessories. There is currently no children's or infants' wear in the study area.

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Most of the recommended space (9,000 square feet) is for additional mid-range and business women's apparel. The remaining 1,500 square feet are recommended as a specialty or mid-range shoe store.

The apparel tenants should primarily be quality, moderately priced retailers, offering a wide appeal of apparel style and/or business attire. The retailers should offer good service levels, especially during the lunch hour to entice downtown workers, and after work hours. Delivery of the purchases to the downtown offices or parking garages would be an additional enticement to cater to the local business worker. The proposed mix of apparel tenants is a closer mix to the typical mix of retail generally desired by consumers.

The trade area has approximately 13,300 women ages 18 or higher with very limited retail competition in the immediate area. The daytime employment of over 28,000 persons within a tight geographical area is a strong advantage for the recommended apparel tenants. The local colleges and tourists visiting the area also increases the expenditure potential for the recommended apparel tenants.

The recommended mix of apparel retailers would face competition primarily from the Lansing Mall, East Lansing Business District and the Frandor Shopping Center. Apparel retailers in the Lansing and Meridian Malls and the surrounding freestanding department stores also compete for this market, albeit to a lesser degree due to their distance from downtown.

Restaurants: *There is sufficient market potential to support 16,500 square feet of additional restaurants in the Lansing study area.*

Of this 16,500 square feet of restaurant space, we recommend that:

- Old Town should have 4,000 square feet (two restaurants) of additional restaurant space offering alcoholic beverages and 6,000 square feet (3-4 restaurants including a coffee house offering evening entertainment) without alcohol beverages, for a total of 10,000 square feet.

- At least three restaurants should be added in the Commerce Center, including one or more alcohol-free restaurants.

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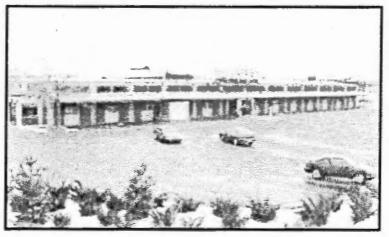
The study area now offers approximately 43,450 square feet of restaurant space. Of this, the majority (19,900 square feet) is located near the Capitol complex; 12,950 square feet are located in the entertainment complex; and the remaining 10,600 square feet are located in Old Town. However, the appeal of the restaurants in these districts is quite different. Those located near the state offices are geared primarily to serve during the lunch hour, while the remainder is more traditional in appeal and in hours of operation.

Several of the restaurants (without alcohol) in the Washington Avenue area should offer a wider variety of cuisine to attract office workers.

Restaurant space should complement, not compete with the existing restaurants. As such, the new space should be devoted to a wider variety of ethnic foods, or to offering a different atmosphere than is currently found in the adjoining area. The younger trade area residents and the smaller household size are demographics which are favorable for the recommended restaurant space. The core of downtown workers, students and tourists have a limited variety of options currently available, especially in Old Town, and to a lesser extent in the Commerce Center. The expanded variety of food alternatives will increase the strength of the existing restaurants by increasing the variety found and encouraging the residential, employee, tourist and student base of consumers to patronize the restaurants more often.

Food and Specialty Food Stores: *There is sufficient market potential to support a 10,000 square foot grocery store in the Lansing study area.*

Ten thousand square feet of grocery store space should be added near Lansing Community College and the City Market. An expansion of the Market to accommodate this space would reinforce its role, broaden its appeal, and complement the area's specialty food retailers and bakeries. The Market already offers parking, a location near transit, and loyal patrons.



Incorporating a grocery store in the City Market would broaden its appeal.

It is also recommended that in addition to a wide variety of canned and dry grocery goods, the store should offer a full variety of fresh meats, bakery, produce and deli items, as well as expanded services such as delivery to nearby offices and residences.

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Other Retail and Services: *There is sufficient market potential to support a total of 21,500 square feet of additional retail and services in the Lansing study area .*

Much of this additional retail should be located in Old Town to create the core of neighborhood business activity needed to further the residential growth and firmly establish the unique identity already begun in the district. The following is our rationale for each of our recommendations:

Art Galleries: *There is sufficient market potential to support an additional 4,500 square feet of local art galleries and incubator businesses.*

Old Town currently has approximately 2,250 square feet of art galleries, which are high in quality and offer unique products. Additional gallery space would encourage comparison shopping, draw more customers, help create a stronger destination hub, and increase the market for residential development. Mixing other retail such as restaurants and coffee shops in with the galleries would encourage leisurely shopping and benefit all commercial uses in the district.

Books and Music: *There is sufficient market potential to support a 1,250 square foot book and music store.*

Old Town has a book store and a music store, both with a loyal following throughout the Lansing area. Another bookstore in Central Lansing would complement the existing retailers, offer a broad appeal, and cater to the younger trade area households.

Drug Store/Pharmacy: *There is sufficient market potential to support a 9,000 square foot drug store offering a variety of convenience and basic grocery store items.*

The closure of Rite-Aid's downtown store left the Central Lansing market largely unserved for pharmaceuticals, health and beauty aids, and other staples. A pharmacy seeking to fill this gap should give strong consideration to the Washington Avenue retail area, in close proximity to the Capitol Complex.

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Furniture and Home Furnishings: *There is sufficient market potential to support an additional 6,000 square feet of furniture and home furnishings retail space in Old Town.*

The recommended furniture and home furnishings stores will complement the proposed art galleries and recommended restaurants. We recommend a 1,000 square foot futon store, 2,000 square feet of antique/refurbished furniture, and 3,000 square feet of unique household furnishings. Further, we recommend that as the neighborhood develops, the existing used merchandise stores in Old Town be upgraded to encourage further comparison shopping.

Currently, Old Town offers several used merchandise stores, including one that offers some refurbished pieces. The additional stores recommended would increase the size of the retail hub and complement the current offerings. As Old Town develops, the retailers will be able to capitalize on the growth and renovation of nearby housing, as well as the expanded trade area which will pull consumers from the entire Lansing market.

Pet Store: *There is sufficient market potential to support a small (750 square feet) pet store offering a variety of pet supplies and services such as grooming.*

The smaller household sizes in the trade area, as well as the younger trade area residents are favorable demographics for a pet store, especially one offering a variety of services such as grooming and boarding. Currently, there is no pet supply store in Central Lansing, and such a retailer would be unique to the area. The pet store should encourage the customers to walk in with their pets, as to encourage pedestrian traffic in the area.

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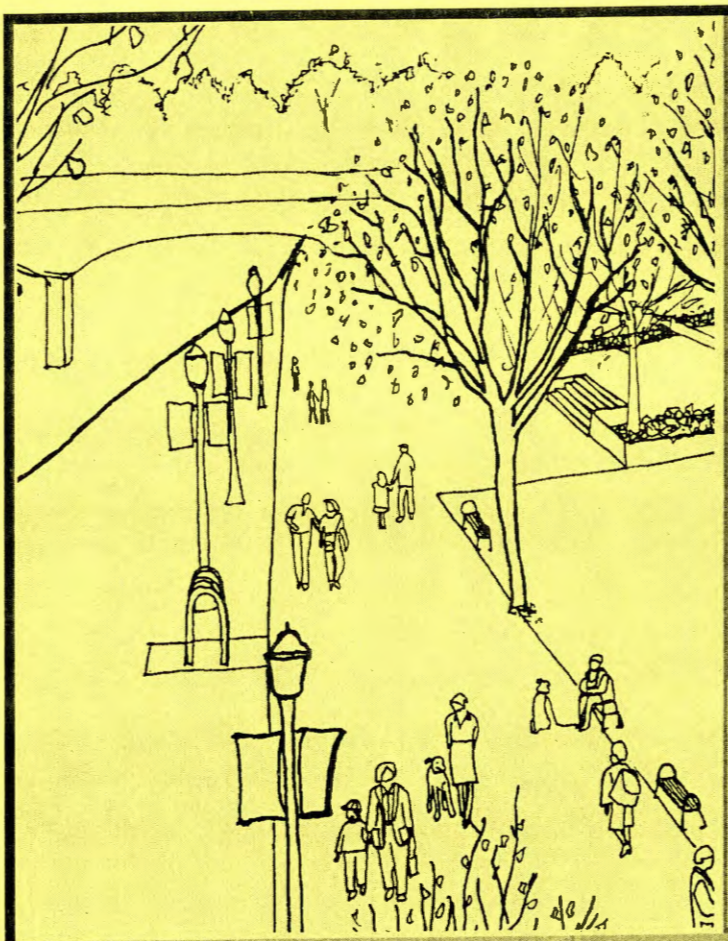
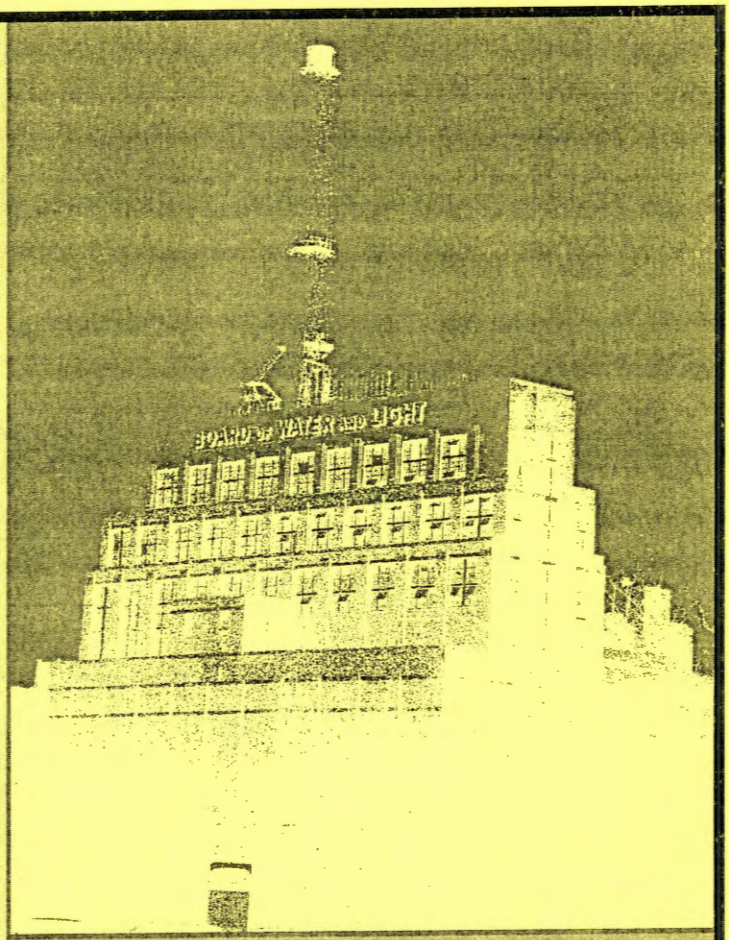
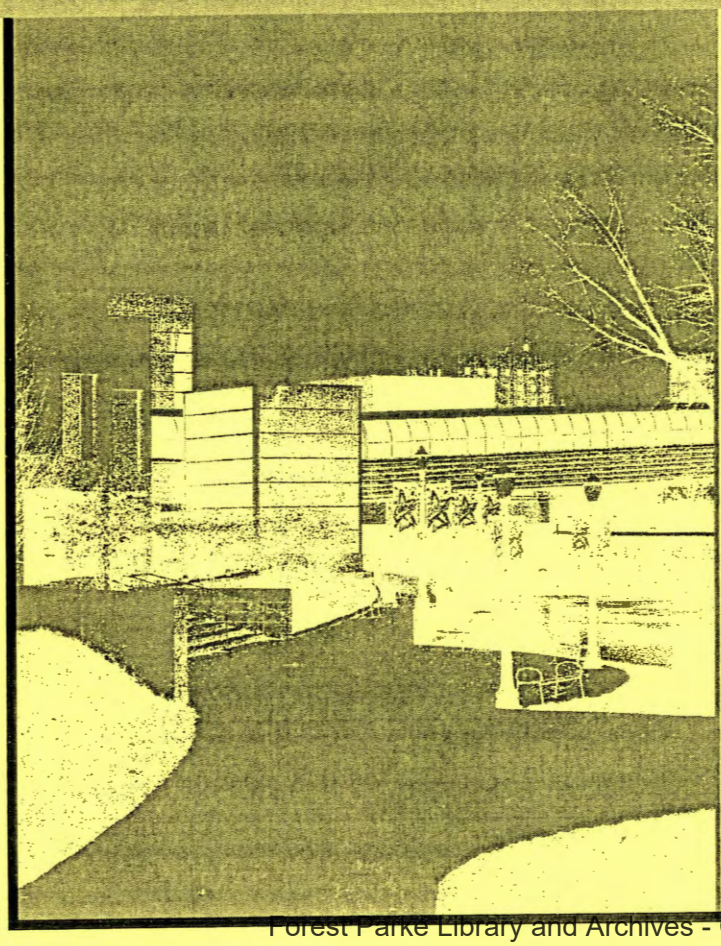
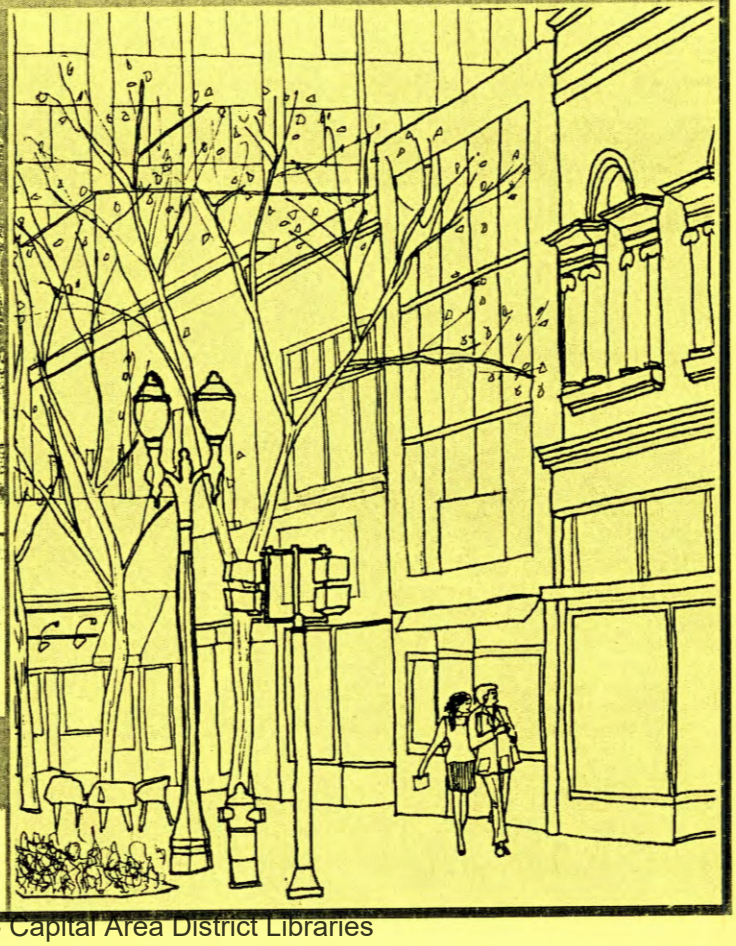




Section IV - CENTRAL LANSING DEVELOPMENT PLAN





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SECTION IV
CENTRAL LANSING DEVELOPMENT PLAN

This section contains recommendations on specified land use designations, circulation and urban design. Section V discusses each of the fourteen districts, the riverfront, and the Washington Avenue corridor in detail, and makes recommendations for their future development.

Future Land Use Concept

The general concept for the future land use of the study area provides for two major commercial areas, the Commerce Center and Old Town. Surrounding these commercial areas are a variety of districts which are defined based upon shared characteristics.

Clarifying Central Lansing as a collection of districts, or activity centers, not only defines unique characteristics of Lansing but also influences the long-term conservation and enhancement of the neighborhoods. Looking at the central area as a series of activity centers also will organize and define the special elements that shape the overall community. The Central Lansing study area comprises 14 activity districts:

1. **The Turner-Dodge District** - primarily a residential area which includes the historic Turner-Dodge mansion, which provides a glimpse into Lansing's past.
2. **Willow-Pine** - a residential area which links Old Town to the neighborhoods to the west.
3. **Old Town** - an historic commercial area and an emerging arts district.
4. **Durant Park Village** - a stately office/residential area.
5. **River Vista** - a "transit village" link between Old Town and the Commerce Center.
6. **Pere Marquette Crossing** - a light industrial area with high technology potential.
7. **Lansing Community College** - an urban college campus and job training center.
8. **Scofield Place** - a commercial area with prime residential possibilities.
9. **Ferris Park** - an office and residential area overlooking the State Government Complex.

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10. **Commerce Center** - the traditional downtown of retail, office, entertainment, and institutional activity.
11. **Park Place** - a potential location for high technology/light industrial uses.
12. **State Government Complex** - the State Capitol and government buildings.
13. **Reutter Park** - an office and residential district bordering the Commerce Center and State offices.
14. **Cherry Hill** - an historic residential enclave along the Grand River.

The districts were identified due to commonalities in function, appearance, and character. Some elements pertaining to these districts are also included in the Washington Avenue Corridor and the Riverfront discussions.

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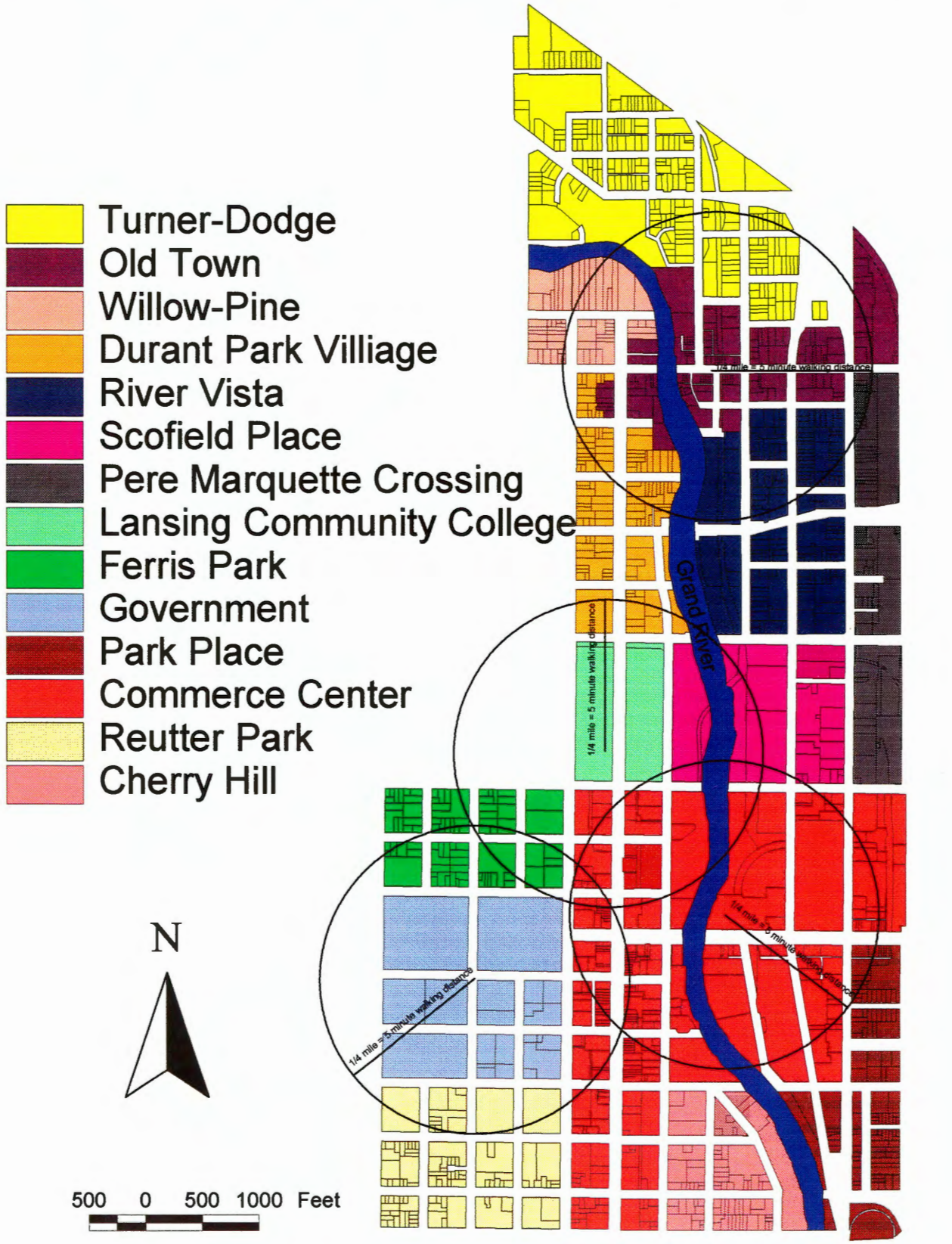
CENTRAL LANSING DISTRICTS



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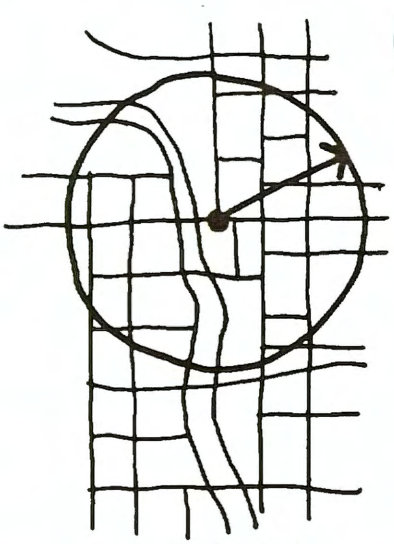
Traditional Neighborhood Design

Traditional neighborhood design standards dictate that an area which is considered "walkable" provides a concentration of all necessary amenities and services such as park and recreation areas, a library and commercial centers within a five minute walk. The district map delineates the Five Minute Walk Circles to help illustrate the walkability and desired concentration of use within the activity centers. Each district is potentially walkable. However, the key issues are to intensify activity within each district, to accommodate growth and expansion, and to connect these districts.



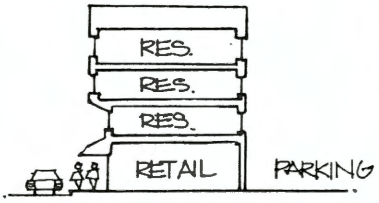
Intensify Activity

Encourage Residential Development

The market analysis conducted as part of this planning process indicates that residential growth must precede or accompany further commercial and office growth for the Central Lansing planning area to succeed. Housing is, thus, a high priority for development within Central Lansing.

Housing opportunities need to be available in greater numbers, sizes, varieties, and locations to encourage a diversity of residents and income levels.

Residences should be located as close as possible to jobs, shopping, and other Central Lansing attractions. New housing should be provided within commercial areas to provide 24-hour activity. Loft apartments and condominiums should be constructed in multi-story retail and office buildings.



Provide new housing within commercial areas.

Residences should be constructed near the riverfront to take advantage of the amenities and linkages the river provides. Riverfront residential development also ensures the appreciation of property values along the river.

Protect Established Residential Neighborhoods

Articulating the boundaries between non-residential areas and established residential neighborhoods will not only provide a critical mass of activity, it will help to stabilize existing residential areas. Without the threat of unwanted land use encroachment, the community may focus on beautifying and enhancing existing residential neighborhoods.

Protect established residential areas.

Historic residential neighborhoods should be preserved, and efforts to rehabilitate and restore housing be encouraged. The dichotomy between preserving the historic neighborhoods and the recommendation for a mixture of commercial and residential uses

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Encourage Mixed Uses and Higher Densities

Mixing land uses, especially at higher densities, improves the convenience for the pedestrian. Mixed uses improves the number of employment and shopping opportunities, and the number of proximity of customers and workers.

The Plan encourages the mixture of commercial and residential uses in virtually all areas of Central Lansing. Mixed uses are most effective when:

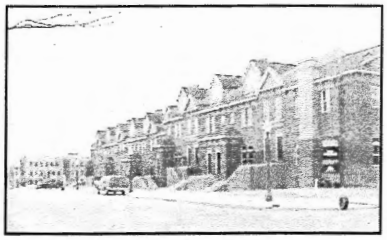
- the uses are complementary;
- the uses are linked with paved sidewalks or paths;
- the uses are within short walking distances of each other;
- the uses create activity at different times of day;
- parking is kept out of the way of the pedestrian's path of travel;
- the uses support each other economically.

Encourage mixed uses and higher densities.

A "critical mass" is created by density and a mixture of uses. Residential areas should be located in close proximity to commercial and office areas. In order for this concept to thrive, many modes of transportation must be available to residents.

Encourage Infill Development

Vacant lots in residential areas should be targets for infill residential development, or divided and combined with adjacent parcels. In commercial areas, vacant parcels and buildings present opportunities for new residences and mixed use development.

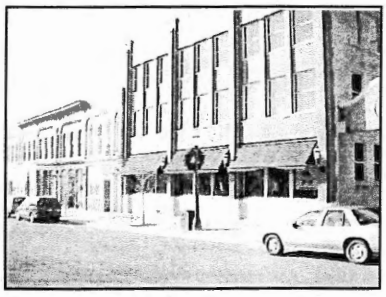


Encourage infill development

Mixed-use development, oriented also requires fewer parking spaces. Parking lots interrupt the continuous retail frontage necessary for retail success, and conflict with pedestrian movement. Large parking lots, therefore, present additional sites for infill development. Parking in these areas should be located above, below, or behind street-level storefronts.

Encourage Adaptive Reuse

The adaptive reuse of buildings should be encouraged where possible. Due to current conditions and existing land use in Central Lansing, adaptive reuse can be less expensive than demolition and redevelopment, and can preserve and enhance the character of the surrounding area.



Encourage adaptive reuse.

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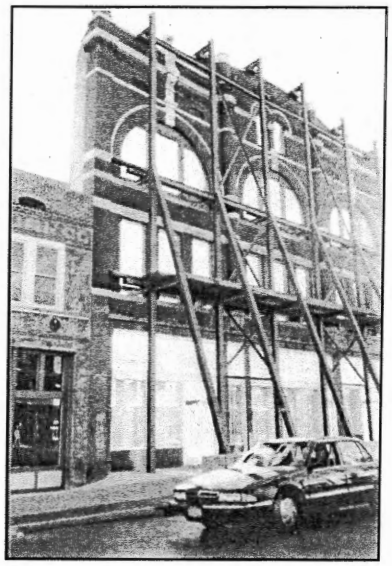
Encourage Growth and Expansion

Central Lansing needs growth to survive. Efforts to encourage and accommodate growth must continue. Expansion inevitably raises land use issues that must be resolved for the benefit of the developer and the betterment of the community. The growth of business institutions such as the State of Michigan, Lansing Community College, Cooley Law School and the Entertainment Complex must be accommodated while preserving Central Lansing's assets and enhancing its position in the marketplace.

These expansions should be directed into historic buildings and infill sites where possible. The demolition of historic resources should be avoided, and alternatives fully explored. New buildings should reinforce the character of their surroundings and the vision of the Plan.



Alternatives to demolition should be fully explored.

Connect the Districts

Cross-use between activity centers and land uses must be established in order for Central Lansing to remain vital. The most feasible and logical method to accomplish this is by encouraging pedestrian circulation. According to the 1990 Nationwide Personal Transportation Survey, the median pedestrian trip length for shopping, transit access and other family business is approximately five minutes, or just over 1/4 mile. Social and recreational walking trips are about twice that length.

- *Mixture of uses within 1/4 mile walking distance*
- *Social/recreational walking destinations*
- *Convenient transit and bicycle use*
- *Design linkages*

To encourage pedestrian movement within and between districts, Central Lansing should provide a mixture of land uses at sufficient densities within walking distances. It should also extend the range of the pedestrian by encouraging bicycle and transit use.

The promotion and use of the existing public transit system are essential. It is important that streets serve the needs of pedestrians and transit, as well as automobiles. The land use recommendations are intended to encourage transit use within and between the Central Lansing districts. Later in this section, the Plan offers a more detailed discussion of circulation with its recommendations.

Linkages among districts should also be reinforced through urban design. Specific design recommendations are discussed later in this section.

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Future Land Use Plan

The goals of a plan are essentially the underlying principles considered throughout the planning process. These visions must be integrated into every section of a plan in order for it to be supported and implemented by the community. The future land use map speaks to a majority of the goals established by the City. The remaining goals are applied in the circulation and community design components of the document.

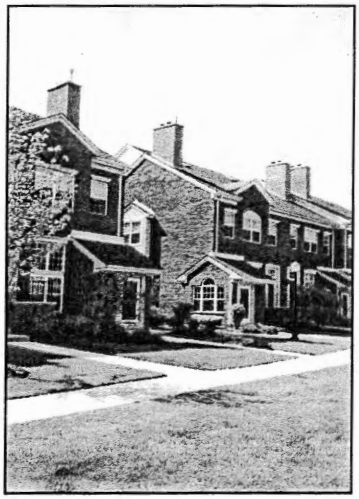
Future Land Use Map

The Future Land Use Map serves to translate goals outlined in Section I into a narrative and graphic illustration. It is derived from existing land use patterns, the market analysis, transportation network, the concept described above and ambitious future visions for certain areas of Central Lansing. It is to be used as a generalized guide to the location of growth and development. The Land Use Plan Map is not intended to serve as a zoning map, nor does it dictate the individual parcels of property. In some areas, more detailed analysis may be necessary to fully determine the feasibility, specific layout and use of certain sites.

The following is a description of the land use categories found on the Future Land Use Map located on page 4-11:

Residential (0-11 du/acre)

These areas are planned for residences in densities of 11 units per acre or less. Development typically consists of detached single family homes on about 4,000 to 8,000 square foot lots. Infill duplexes and townhouses that complement the existing single family character would be appropriate in these areas. New residences should be established on infill lots and in clusters. Residential blocks should face each other to establish traditional neighborhood character for the area.



Medium Density Residential Prototype

Residential (12-20 du/acre) w/ Associated Mixed Use

These areas are planned for Central business district support services, neighborhood support services and residential densities at approximately 12 to 20 dwelling units per acre.

Residential development should generally consist of the preservation of existing detached single family dwellings, but primarily of townhouses mixed with some apartments over first floor commercial. Buildings in these areas should be a maximum of three stories and provide walk-up entryways. The introduction of a mixture of uses within buildings may be permitted in these areas as well. For example, a residential complex which provides nearby convenience goods or deli are possibilities for development.

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Commercial uses in this area should be a maximum of three stories, and architecturally compatible with the neighboring residential uses. Site design should contribute to a pedestrian street environment and use landscape to soften walls and paving. A balance between commercial and residential uses should be maintained.

Residential (over 20 du/acre) w/ Associated Mixed Use

The density planned for this land use category is approximately 20 or more dwelling units per acre. Due to the higher density, development will lend itself to low rise three or four story buildings. Loft dwellings and industrial building conversions are encouraged in this area or other adaptive reuse in addition to the traditional high density residential type developments. Similar to the character of Old Town, buildings may provide a mixture of uses such as apartments above retail or office space. These areas will serve as transitions between low density development and higher density activity centers.

Potential for upper level residential use

Mixed Use (Residential, Office, Commercial)

Under this designation, residential, office, and commercial uses, would be appropriate in a complementary balance. Mixed use and clustered use projects oriented toward transit and the pedestrian, should be encouraged. The intent for this designation is to provide pedestrian scale neighborhood shopping opportunities without creating retail or office districts.

Office

This designation is most appropriate for some academic and government institutions, which may have less flexibility and will require offices on a stand-alone basis.

Low Density Residential/Ground Floor Business

These areas provide a mixture of low density housing opportunities with office or retail uses in the area. Many structures are homes which have been converted to office use or are utilized for both office/retail and residential use. Because both are important to the success of the area and both are acceptable uses adjacent to one another this type of development may be maintained with specific design and use guidelines.

Maintain residential character in low density residential/ ground floor business areas.

Office with First Floor Retail

This land use designation is intended to help bring food and shopping choices closer to office workers, and bridge the gulf between office and retail areas. Buildings so designated tend to be designed and built as multi-story office buildings. Some remodeling of these buildings may be required, but is expected to

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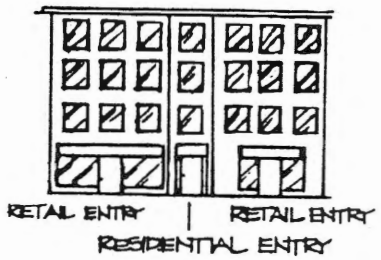
be minimal. Implementation of this designation as a zoning district would require ordinance amendments discussed later in this section.

Retail/Commercial w/ Upper Floor Mixed Use

Retail areas in the Commerce Center and Old Town would benefit from the presence of residential and office uses in the upper floors. This designation accommodates and encourages the full use of multi-story commercial buildings. Moreover, the City now offers Neighborhood Enterprise Zone tax incentives for upper floor residential development along S. Washington Avenue in the Commerce Center.



Multi-story commercial building with upper floor residential use

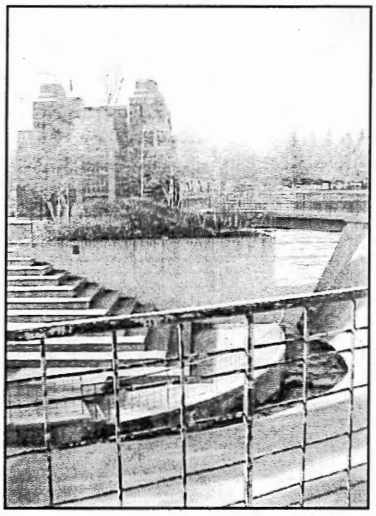
To encourage the critical mass necessary for the success of retail districts, the first floor of buildings within this designation should be reserved for retail/restaurant activity.

General Commerce

This designation also encourages a mixture of uses, at both the site and district level. However, mixed uses in this district are generally more achievable by the clustering of complementary uses together, rather than through multiple uses in a single building. Thus many entertainment complex venues such as the Lansing Center, Oldsmobile park, museums, and the City market are designated for general commerce. A proposed Performing Arts Center may also be appropriate for this district.

Community Facilities/Open Space

Central Lansing is rich with community facilities, parks and open space that benefit its residents, businesses, and visitors. This designation is established to enhance and protect these amenities.



Brenke Fish Ladder

The River Trail forms the spine of the Central Lansing study area, and extends and connects the Adado Riverfront Park, the Turner-Dodge Mansion, Burchard Park, the Brenke Fish Ladder, all located along the east bank of the Grand River. Kalamazoo Plaza and River Street Park abut the river across from the River Trail. Durant and Reutter Parks are attractive urban parks, one block square, framed by residences and offices. Reasoner Park is a neighborhood park that serves the Turner-Dodge district.

Numerous churches contribute greatly to the historical character and pedestrian scale of the study area. Cedar Street School, now vacant, still stands in the Old Town area. The parks, churches, and school remain important assets to the study area, and should be preserved and enhanced.

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High Technology/Light Industrial

The proximity of General Motors, Lansing Community College and Sparrow Hospital combine to make High Technology/Light Industrial an appropriate designation for this area. Advances in industry and technology have created uses which area related to industry and office uses, but may not be appropriate or function adequately in a typical industrial or office zoning district. These uses are not objectionable in terms of noise, heavy truck traffic, fumes or similar characteristics, so they also act as a transition between heavier industrial uses outside the central area boundary and non-industrial uses within the central area. High technology uses can be encouraged by a high speed digital, audio and video infrastructure. An educated workforce, transportation, and quality of life amenities such as those emerging in Central Lansing are also attractive factors.

Alternatives Considered

The Steering Committee considered four land use concepts prior to submitting its final land use recommendation to the Planning Board. Its final land use Concept, with modifications, led to the identification of activity districts. These districts are described in detail later in this section, along with specific recommendations for each district.

The Steering Committee's final land use concept, entitled "Alternative D," is enclosed in the Appendix.

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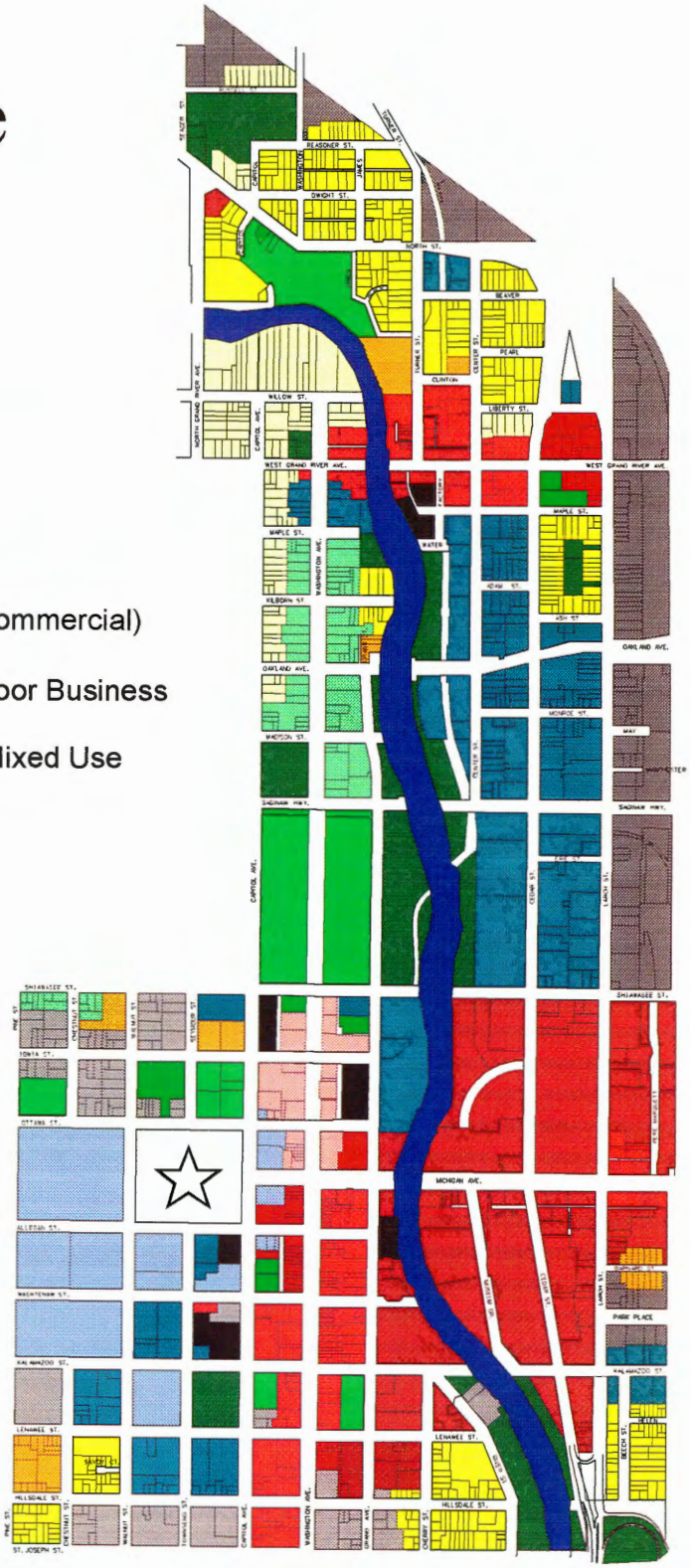
Future Land Use

CENTRAL LANSING
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

City of Lansing, Michigan

Legend

- Residential (0-11 du/ac)
- Residential (12-20 du/ac)
- Residential (20+ du/ac)
- Mixed Use (Residential, Office & Commercial)
- Office
- Low Density Residential/Ground Floor Business
- Office w/First Floor Retail
- Retail/Commercial w/Upper Floor Mixed Use
- General Commerce
- High Technology/Light Industrial
- Government Office
- Community Facilities
- Open Space
- Parking
- State Capitol
- Grand River



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Community Circulation

> "Transportation is intrinsically woven into the fabric of our existence, encompassing not only how we get from place to place, but also how we conduct our daily routines...Getting to work, school, or medical appointments, running errands, shopping, socializing and enjoying recreational pursuits are among the many things we do that are affected by the kinds of transportation available (or not available) to us. The location and appearance of transportation facilities, the design of streets and sidewalks, and the placement of on-street parking can make all the difference in how we experience our daily activities."
> - (Building Livable Communities Through Transportation, U.S. Department of Transportation)

It is important to understand that community circulation concerns the circulation of people, by whatever form of transportation they choose. The more different forms of transportation available, the less likely that any one form will become overloaded or slowed by congestion.

A balanced transportation system will improve way-finding in and around the area, calm traffic through residential areas, eliminate physical barriers between uses and link major activity centers for all modes of transportation. This also includes transportation along the Grand River. Recommended improvements for the linkages to the river are contained in the Community Design portion of this section. An effective community circulation plan for the study area must not only achieve the Development Plan Objective of improving linkages throughout Central Lansing, but must also work towards stabilizing the residential neighborhoods.

- ❖ *Improve accessibility in and around Central Lansing for transit, vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian traffic*

- ❖ *Preserve the integrity of residential neighborhoods adjacent to major activity centers*

The most recent twenty-four hour daily traffic data and parking data were obtained from the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, City of Lansing, and Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) to evaluate the operation of the City's street network and its existing parking conditions. Based on a review of the available traffic data and field observations, the study area street system and intersections operate at a relatively high level of service which implies minimal congestion of traffic. In fact, even during peak commute periods, only short and minor congestion was recorded.

The circulation recommendations will require detailed studies of their impacts on existing traffic, transit and parking conditions to determine their functional feasibility.

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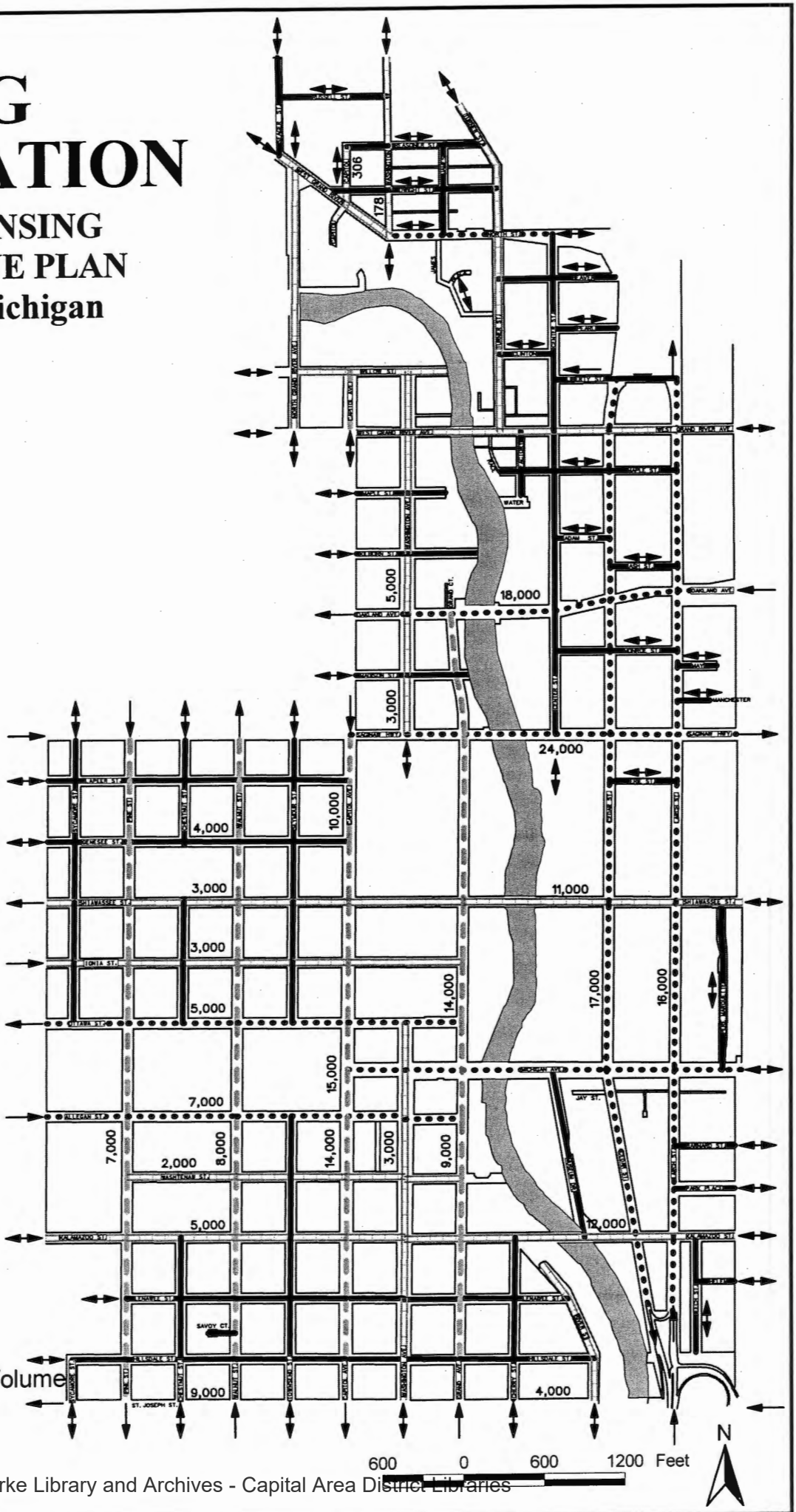
EXISTING CIRCULATION

DOWNTOWN LANSING COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

City of Lansing, Michigan



LEGEND

- Right-of-Way Lines
- Local Street/Road
- Other Principal
- Minor Arterial
- Urban Collector
- 0,000 Average Daily Traffic Volume
- Street Direction
- Grand River

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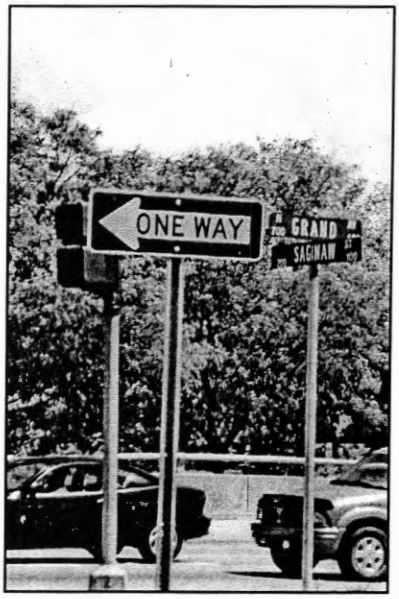
Vehicular Improvements

A grid pattern and one-way couplet street system characterize the existing roadway network within Central Lansing. Interstate 496 runs east-west along the south edge of the study area. Several north-south principal and minor arterials, major collectors, and local roadways connect Old Town in the north to I-496 in the south, with Washington Avenue continuing over I-496 to the commercial district in the Riverpoint Neighborhood. The functional classification, average daily traffic volumes and traffic operation (one-way or two-way) are illustrated on the preceding page. The one-way roadway network in downtown Lansing provides high capacity, unrestricted commuter traffic flow for drivers into or out of Central Lansing.

The predominance of these one-way streets poses a significant impediment to the visitors and others not familiar with the downtown. One-way streets reduce opportunities for direct access to local destinations, and make traffic circulation more difficult. Businesses are less accessible to clientele. Capital Area Transportation Authority (CATA) bus routes are more circuitous and time-consuming. Traffic is funneled through downtown with little or no opportunity for travelers to enjoy the amenities, and way-finding for motorists unfamiliar with the area is difficult.

In the summer of 1999, there were fifteen one-way streets in Central Lansing. Twelve function as pairs or couplets. These east-west couplets are Saginaw Street and Oakland Avenue; Ionia and Shiawassee Streets; and Allegan and Ottawa Streets. The north-south couplets are Walnut and Pine Streets; Grand and Capitol Avenues; and Larch and Cedar Streets. Liberty and Washtenaw Streets are independent one-way streets. St. Joseph Street runs one-way westbound paralleling the north side of I-496. Its couplet is Main Street, which runs one-way east bound, parallel to the south side of I-496.



One-way streets pose impediments for motorists

The conversion of all one-way streets to two-way traffic operation is recommended except in those instances where a detailed traffic study shows that such a conversion is inadvisable. As proposed, the only remaining one-way streets in Central Lansing will be Oakland Avenue and Saginaw, St. Joseph, and Main Streets, all of which are important regional arteries. A phased approach to these conversions has been suggested:

The proposed circulation plan has three stages, all of equal importance but phased according to ease of implementation. Again, these recommendations should be completely evaluated to determine functional and economic feasibility.

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❖*Convert Ionia Street, Liberty Street, Washtenaw Street, and Shiawassee Street west of Grand Avenue to conventional two-way traffic flow.*

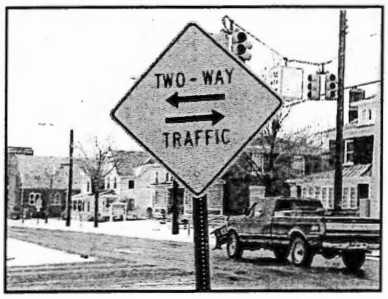
Phase I: Convert Ionia, Liberty, Washtenaw and Shiawassee Streets to conventional two-way traffic flow. These streets currently carry low traffic volumes and operate well below their design capacity, either as one-way or two-way streets. In addition, Shiawassee Street is a cross-river route, and would serve as a better linkage between the State Government and Entertainment Districts if its two-way operation was expanded west of Grand Avenue. The data available shows that Phase I is feasible and implementation has already been initiated.

❖*Reverse the direction of one-way traffic flow on Ottawa and Allegan Streets and convert Pine Street and Grand Avenue to two-way traffic operation.*

Phase II: Convert Allegan, Ottawa, and all remaining one-way streets east of Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd., west of the Grand River, south of Oakland Ave., and north of Main St. (except Saginaw and St. Joseph) to two-way traffic operation.

Currently the traffic flow on the streets bordering the Capitol Building reverses every block, thereby "pushing" a motorist unfamiliar with the area two to three blocks away from the Capitol, resulting in circuitous travel and confusion.

In changing to two-way traffic flow, the capacity to accommodate traffic is substantially unaffected and no on-street parking is eliminated, while substantially improving circulation, and the user-friendliness of the area.



The conversion of Grand Avenue from one-way to two-way may present some obstacles which will need to be addressed. Specifically, existing parking ramps are configured to serve one-way access. The CATA Transportation Center, which handles over 700 movements in and out of it each weekday, is also configured for one-way access, and currently operates in an orderly and expedient manner. Bus turning movements may be constricted at some intersections.

A study will be conducted in 1999 and 2000 to determine the impacts of the Phase II proposal.

❖*Convert Larch Street to a two-way, four-lane major north-south thoroughfare and reduce Cedar Street to a two-way, two-lane, local street.*

Phase III: Convert Larch Street to a two-way, four lane, major north-south arterial. Convert Cedar Street to a local collector street with two-way operation, bike lanes, and on-street parking. Currently, the Larch and Cedar Street one-way couplet acts as a physical barrier for east-west connectivity, intimidating pedestrian movement and impeding cohesive residential development. This is primarily due to high volumes of traffic and the relatively high speed of vehicles. It is important to note that Larch and Cedar Streets provide a regional, as well as local, function by moving high volumes of traffic to and from areas located north and south of

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the City. Adequate right-of-way exists along Larch Street to allow for additional lanes and/or turn lanes at intersections, thus improving the ability to carry higher traffic volumes. The intent would be that any modifications to the operation of Larch and Cedar Streets would need to match existing conditions north of I-496 to prevent modifications to the interchange.

This proposal not only eliminates Cedar Street as a barrier, but could improve property values between Cedar Street and Larch Street, providing greater potential for vital residential development just north of the Commerce Center. The proposal would also provide additional pedestrian scale on-street parking in the heart of the Entertainment Complex where parking needs are critical.

Further study on the impacts of Phase III will be necessary prior to implementation.

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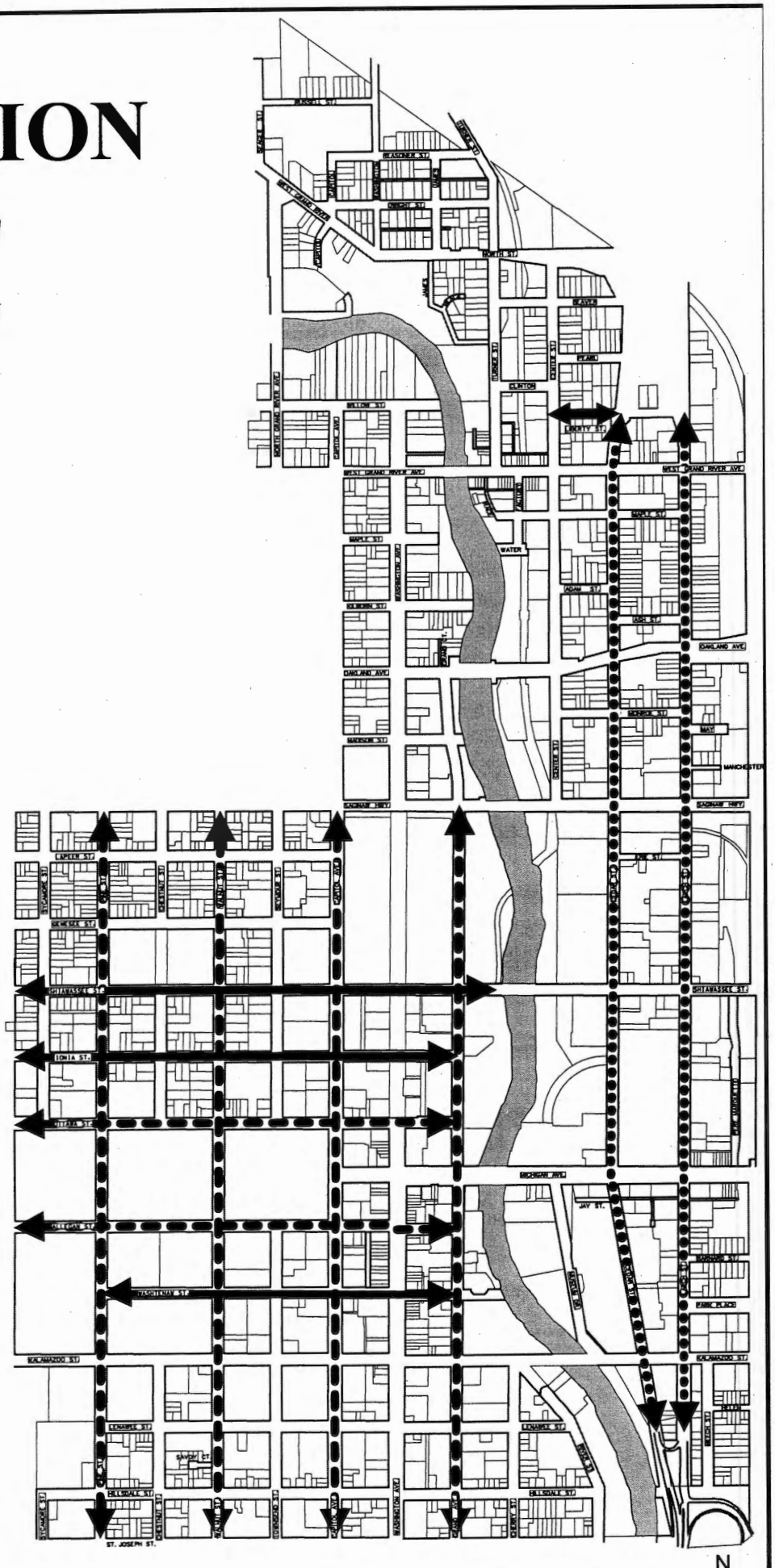
CIRCULATION PROPOSAL

DOWNTOWN LANSING COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

City of Lansing, Michigan


LEGEND
Right-of-Way Lines
Parcel Lines
Phase I Modification
Convert Ionia, Shiawassee, Washtenaw, and Liberty Streets from 1-way to 2-way
Phase II Modification
Convert Allegan, Ottowa, and all remaining 1-way streets east of M.L.K. Blvd., west of the Grand River, south of Oakland Ave., and north of Main St. (excluding Saginaw & St. Joseph) to 2-way.
Phase III Modification
Convert Larch Street to a 2-way, 4-lane, north-south arterial. Convert Cedar Street to a 2-way local collector with bike lanes & on-street parking.
Grand River
600 0 600 1200 Feet
N

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Roadway Improvements

Several types of changes in the roadway are suggested to calm vehicular traffic and improve pedestrian, bicycle, and transit circulation. These suggestions, pending more specific study and economic feasibility, include the following:

- Install bike lanes on all arterials and collector streets where roadway widths allow, except for along the South Washington Mall, where the steep roadway crown and 90-degree parking renders bike lanes unsafe.

- Provide signs and striping that identify bike routes for added visibility, separation, convenience and recognition to bicycle traffic in roadway.

- Consider a "No Turn On Red" policy for vehicular traffic (with the possible exception of buses) at some intersections within the planning area to improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists.

- Prevent and eliminate unnecessary curb cuts within the district. Mid-block turning movements interrupt the flow of vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle traffic, and increase conflicts among transportation modes.

- Provide signage which posts the timing of the traffic signals (not just the speed limit), to discourage people from speeding up to beat red lights.

- Lower the speed limits in areas where high pedestrian traffic is encouraged.

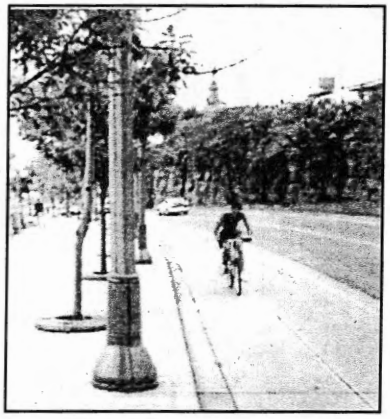
- Provide raised intersections and speed humps to alert motorists of pedestrian crossings and intersections.

- Change street sign location and typeface appropriately to improve visibility and way-finding.

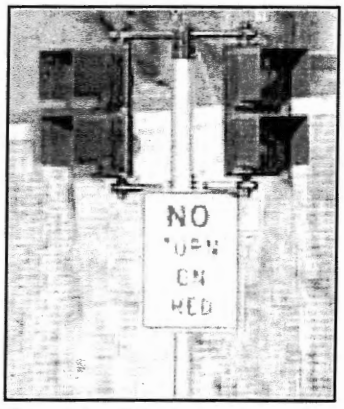
- Explore the installation of landscaped, unsignalized roundabouts to even out the flow of traffic, and to provide additional design opportunities.

- Install raised intersections to slow auto traffic down at key crossing locations.

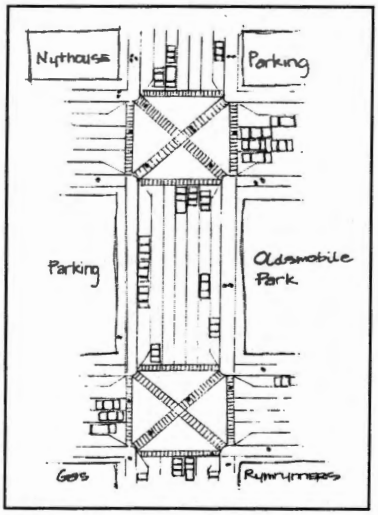
- Consider all-way pedestrian crossings at locations with high pedestrian volumes, especially during special events.



Install bike lanes.



Consider "No turn on red" policy.



All-ways pedestrian crossings

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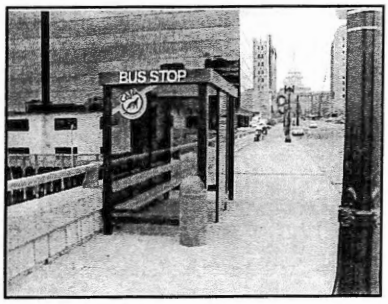
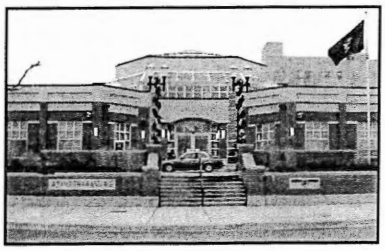
- Consider narrowing streets for mid-block pedestrian crossings in long uninterrupted blocks. E. Michigan Avenue in front of the Lansing Center is a good candidate for such treatment.

Public Transit



The public transportation system in Lansing will greatly benefit from, and contribute to, the success of the Plan. The land use, design and circulation elements discussed can be applied in conjunction with transit improvements.

A critical mass is created by density and a mixture of uses. Residential areas should be located in close proximity to commercial and office areas. Additionally, residential development is encouraged at higher densities for more people. In order for this concept to thrive, many modes of transportation must be available to residents.



CATA Transportation Center

Lansing is fortunate to have an existing system. The City must continue to promote this concept through strengthened cooperation with the Capital Area Transportation Authority (CATA). Employers may also assist through subsidies of bus passes and parking fees. Finally, CATA may also be able to offer a variety of types of services to appeal to the needs of more people. This may include circulation routes or satellite shuttles. CATA also provides bicycle racks on some of its line-haul buses. Combining transit with bicycle use extends the reach of transit service at both the origin and destination.

One-way streets pose problems for transit and riders alike.

In most cases, the conversion of one-way streets will also benefit the public transportation system. The daily routine of accommodating riders is exacerbated by the existing one-way street system. Bus routes are limited to specific streets and additional travel time is incurred because of circuitous travel on one-way streets. Due to the fact that passenger doors are installed on the right side of the bus, stops can be only located on the right side of the street. Because of this situation, passengers are often required to cross three or more lanes of one-way traffic to board a bus. On a two-way street system, bus stops could be located on either side of a street, resulting in safer passenger access, particularly for those with special needs. In addition, bus routes could be located on streets based on minimizing travel delay and maximizing patronage rather than routing by street direction.

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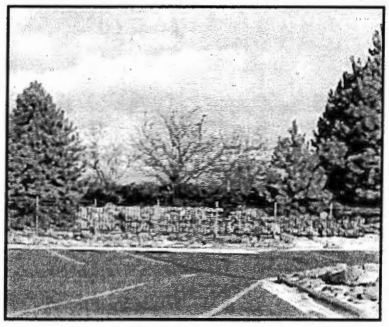
Washington Avenue as Linkage

Because the distance between the north and south termini of the PSD is so great (1.75 miles), providing adequate linkages between the Old Town District and the Commerce Center is difficult. The existing river walk is currently utilized by pedestrians, but the walking distance is extensive, particularly in inclement weather.

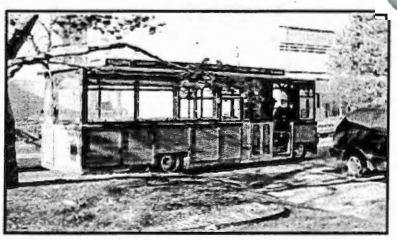
The most logical and direct connection between the Old Town district and the Commerce Center is Washington Avenue. Lansing Community College now has a physical barrier at the north end of campus. Opening the north end of campus along North Washington would establish a psychological and physical connection between Old Town and downtown. Serious study and consideration should be given to the possibility of opening Washington Avenue to pedestrian, bicycle, and/or trolley traffic from Michigan Avenue to Saginaw Street.



Physical barrier at north end of LCC campus.

Rubber-Tired Trolley System

A rubber-tired trolley system is recommended for its flexibility and versatility. A rubber-tired trolley, such as the trolley currently owned by CATA, would be a practical and easily implemented method of improving public transit in the study area. Service should be available at no cost to riders. The trolley system should provide transportation on a regular route. It should provide direct access to all the activity centers in the study area and connect to special amenities outside of the area, such as the Capitol Hill Station in the Riverpoint Neighborhood and the restaurants just east of Old Town on Grand River Avenue. It should also provide links to the CATA Transportation Center, the River Trail, Cooley Gardens, and outlying parking lots.



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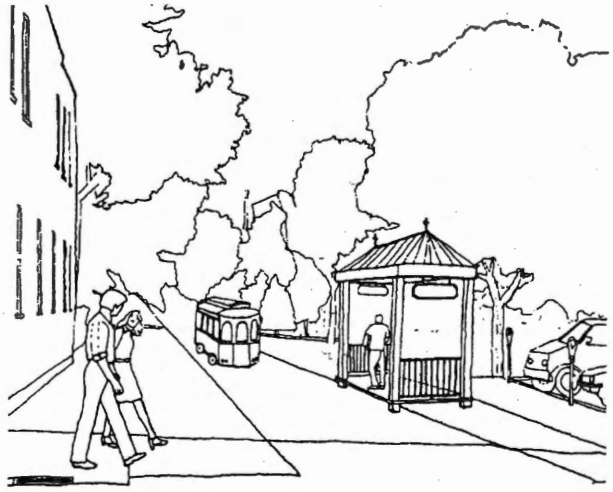
East-West Linkages

Eleven blocks span the east-west dimension of the planning area, a distance that upon occasions is too far to walk, too short to drive. The east-west linkages which connect the State Government Complex with the Commerce Center are, therefore, extremely important. The trolley should connect State offices with restaurant, retail, convention, and entertainment destinations within the Commerce Center.

Office workers must have easy access to the Commerce Center's restaurants, stores and attractions in order to take full advantage of them.

The proposed trolley is a component of the transit system that should circulate throughout the entire planning area. Downtown's attraction to new residents will lie in part in a short and convenient transit ride to work. Developments in all districts should be designed for transit use, and efficient transit service should be provided to these districts.

There are significant challenges inherent in implementing such a high level of transit service. Timely shuttle service may require compact routes, while more extended routes may be necessary for complete coverage. A free or low-cost downtown shuttle will require increased funding levels, or sacrifices in other transportation services. High ridership levels will be necessary to justify the expense. Cooperation and support from employers and businesses will be crucial.



Possible Trolley Stop Design

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Parking Improvements

In order to assess the adequacy of parking supply for existing and future development, the supply was measured for both the Commerce Center and Old Town.

Central Lansing contains metered and un-metered on-street, surface lots and structured parking facilities. Three separate parking studies were conducted to determine parking supply and demand and to project future parking needs. The first study focused on the Commerce Center, the latter two on Old Town.

Parking - Commerce Center

The first parking analysis examined parking supply and demand within the Commerce Center, compiled the results on a database, and mapped the existing parking supply using a geographic information system (GIS). The results of this study are illustrated in the Existing Parking Map. The study analyzed the total number of parking spaces, and identified the percentage occupied.

Table 1 - Commerce Center - Existing Parking Conditions

District	Existing Parking Spaces		
	Supply	Occupied	Percent Occupied
West of the Grand River	6,093	4,756	78%
East of the Grand River	890	737	83%
Total	6,983	5,493	79%

Table 1 shows the total number of spaces, from all sources, and the percentage of total occupied parking spaces were identified. The Commerce Center has 6,093 spaces west of the Grand River, 890 spaces east of the river.

As the marketing analysis states, the Central Lansing study area can support an additional 50,500 square feet of retail space. This increase in retail activity will generate a substantial demand for parking. Demand for new parking is weighted against the existing unoccupied parking illustrated in Table 2 below. Please note that Table 2 references supply and occupancy numbers from Table 1.

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Table 2 - Commerce Center - Future Parking Conditions							
	Estimated Future Increase in Parking Demand						
District	New Restaurant	New Retail	Net Incr.	Total Demand	Total Supply	Percent Occupied	Surplus/ (Shortage)[1]
West of the Grand River	81	73	154	4,910	6.093	81%	269
East of the Grand River	51	75	126	863	890	97%	(106)
Total	132	148	280	5,773	6,983	83%	163

Footnote [1]: Based on a target occupancy of 85% representing a full parking facility.

Table 2 indicates that the Commerce Center's parking supply is sufficient for its demand, and that the supply is located primarily west of the river, with any shortages occurring east of the river.

The Central Lansing District Map indicates that at this time, much of the Entertainment Complex, including Oldsmobile Park, the Lansing Center, the City Market, and "Museum Row" is within a quarter-mile of two large parking structures located along Grand Avenue.

An additional 1,926 spaces were found in other areas within Central Lansing, excluding Old Town.

Parking - North Lansing/Old Town

Recently, two complementary studies of parking within the Old Town Commercial District have been completed. The first study, *Parking Supply and Demand Study, North Lansing/Old Town Commercial District*, completed by the City's Planning Department in January 1999, indicates that the present number of parking spaces required by the Zoning Code for the district is approximately 1,599. In addition, there are currently 849 off-street parking spaces provided, 178 on street, and vacant land upon which approximately 564 additional spaces could be developed. If all the potential off street spaces were developed, the total number of parking spaces would be 1,591 or 99.5% of the number required by the Zoning Code.

The second study, *Technical Visit Report on Parking, Old Town Main Street Program,* was completed by an independent parking consultant hired by the National Main Street Center to provide services for the local Main Street program. This report provided an independent evaluation of the Planning Staff's report and parking study. This consultant's report concluded that there is an adequate number of parking spaces for current businesses, better management of parking resources are necessary, and an additional 200 parking spaces are necessary to meet future

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demands when all currently vacant buildings are full. Operational alternatives recommended include one- to two-hour parking turnover, and adjustment of the Zoning Code's parking requirements for the urban district, possibly through implementation of an overlay zoning district for Old Town.

An adequate parking supply is essential to the Central Lansing's success. However, parking structures are expensive and surface parking is unattractive. Moreover, the dominance of parking as a land use can destroy the critical mass and density required for the district to thrive. Thus, flexible parking requirements and parking reduction strategies should be strongly considered. These strategies could include:

- Providing long-term parking on the periphery of the planning area in conjunction with transit service into the district
- Providing a "parking bank" which earmarks existing public and private parking spaces for new development projects, thus alleviating shortages and surpluses in the supply of parking spaces
- Reducing parking requirements for complementary mixed use developments, developments that provide transit stop amenities beyond the minimum requirements, and land uses with shared parking arrangements
- Providing for fees in lieu of parking, to help finance public transit or parking
- Adding maximum limits to the number of parking spaces on each site to prevent the intrusion of large parking lots as a land use
- Adjusting turnover requirements to ensure that short term customer parking is available in sufficient quantities at appropriate locations.

New parking areas, when appropriate, must be well planned. Parking spaces should be on-street wherever possible and certainly close to the major activity centers. On-street parking should be provided on both sides of the streets wherever possible.

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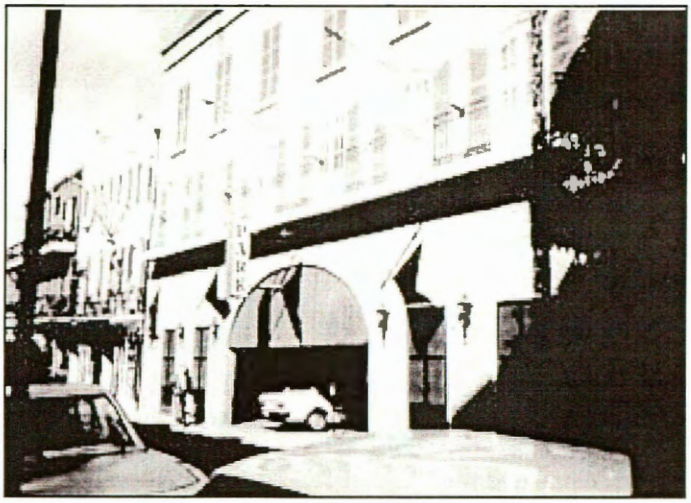
This will create additional parking and create a protective physical and psychological barrier between auto traffic and pedestrians. Safe, convenient bicycle parking should also be provided.

Off-street parking lots, if needed, should be placed in small vacant spaces behind buildings. Large surface lots should be discouraged, and alternatives to demolishing buildings for additional parking should be fully explored.

Parking on a larger scale should be located in parking structures. New structures should be built with sensitivity to the aesthetics of the surrounding area and in a manner that makes adaptive reuse possible. Commercial uses should occupy the street level, with parking above, below, or behind the storefronts.



Parking structure design should be compatible with the character of the surrounding area.

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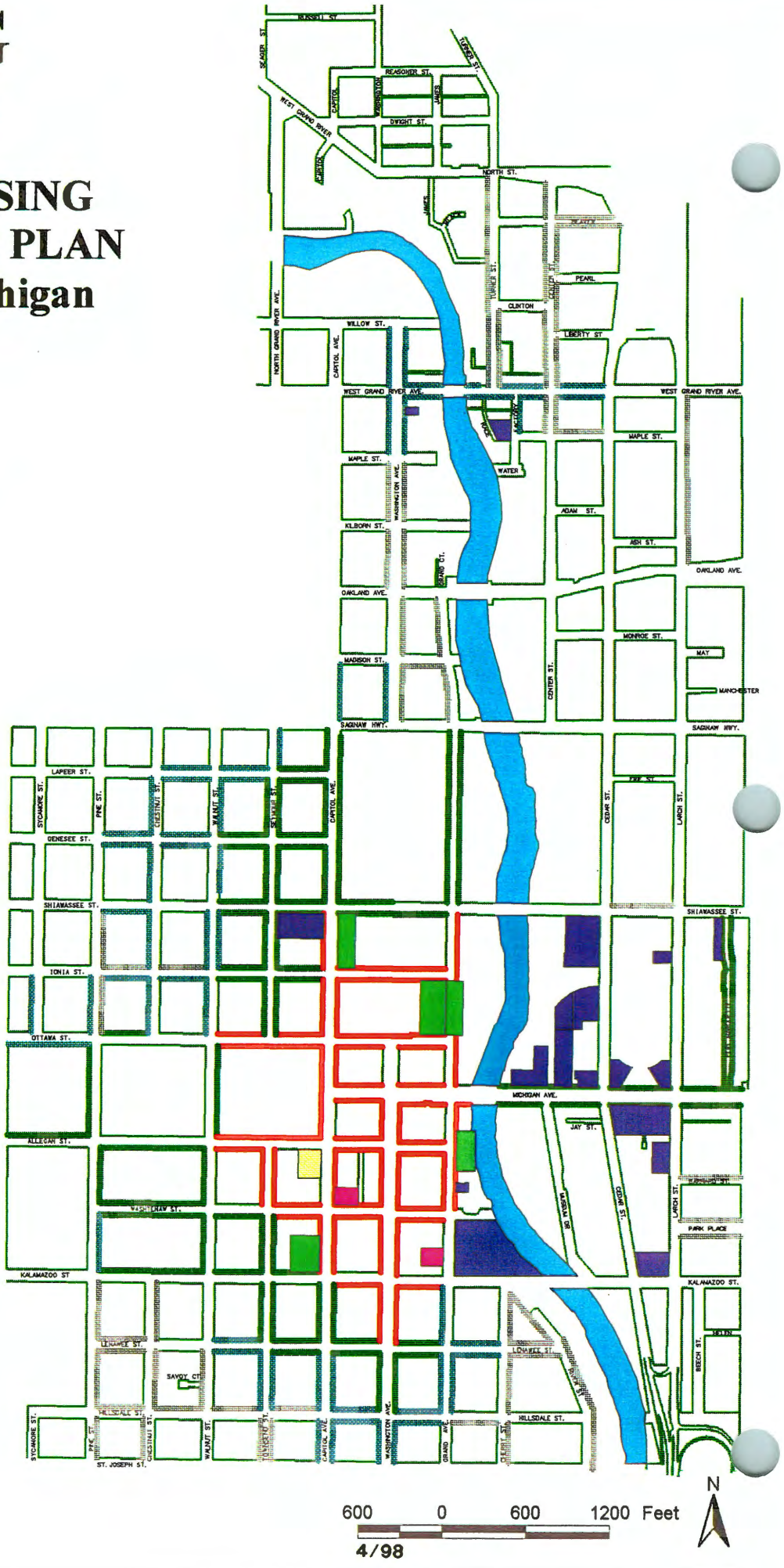
EXISTING PARKING

DOWNTOWN LANSING COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

City of Lansing, Michigan



LEGEND

- Right-of-Way Lines
- Grand River
- City Lot
- City Ramp
- Private Lot
- Private Ramp
- Free
- $0.25/hr.
- $0.75/hr.
- $1.00/hr.

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Urban Design Recommendations

"Each change in the urban landscape is an opportunity to think about better design."
— Neal R. Peirce et al., Citistates

The physical quality and design of Central Lansing is essential to maintaining investment in the area. People flock to downtowns that are designed for people to spend time in rather than simply pass through. The same design qualities that create a livable city also attract tourism. According to recent market research cited in the April 27, 1998 issue of U.S. News and World Report, "today's American consumers say they are particularly annoyed by commercial strips and that in principle they would prefer neighborhoods clustered around a downtown or village center." Downtown Lansing currently offers this neighborhood life style and has many opportunities to expand and improve the quality of life in Central Lansing through community planning and design. The first step is to shape the character and visual form of the city so it is a better place to live, work, and play.

Community Identity

The skyline is the most prominent expression of a city's identity, the culmination of the urban experience. The skyline marks the initial gateway into the city, and is often visible well before it is reached. Downtown Lansing's skyline is visible from a number of different vantage points, including Interstate 496, Riverfront Park, East Michigan Avenue, North Cedar Street, the Shiawassee and Kalamazoo Street bridges, and the Capitol Loop. The State Capitol stands proudly at the terminus of Michigan Avenue, and sets a high standard for building appearance - a standard that can be reached only through attention to architectural design, the color, texture and form of all Lansing structures.

Gateways

Central Lansing's primary entrances should project a variety of distinct and positive images. They should invite people in and make them excited about being here. The gateways should serve as a transition point where the character of the area changes to a very pedestrian district with a more urban identity. This urban identity is not abrasive or fearful, but builds on Lansing's comfortable size to project a character of a vital, historic, convenient and safe downtown with a variety of activities and neighborhoods to experience.

Gateways:

- *Entrance to Downtown*
- *First Impression*
- *Image of Downtown*
- *Transition Point*

The unique features of each district should become apparent to the visitor. Special landscaping and decorative street lighting treatments should accent these features. Landmark public art should be sited in these areas where space allows. The way-finding system of signage boards and kiosks should start at these gateways, especially where people are walking.

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Strengthen Linkages

The word "linkage" in this document is used to mean visual connection and physical accessibility. Activity districts and neighborhoods should have their own distinct character. However, linkages between districts should be strong so the use of each district complements and encourages the use of nearby districts.

Strong physical linkages between the districts promote vitality and the opportunity to conduct all aspects of life within Central Lansing. Recommendations in this plan address vehicular and non-vehicular connections to these areas. These recommendations will allow activity areas to be more accessible for motorists. They will promote public transit and improve linkages for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Important Linkages:

- *Old Town and the Entertainment and Capitol districts*
- *Access to the river*
- *Circulation across the river*
- *Access to neighborhoods including the Riverpoint Neighborhood to the south*
- *Lansing Community College campus to neighboring districts*

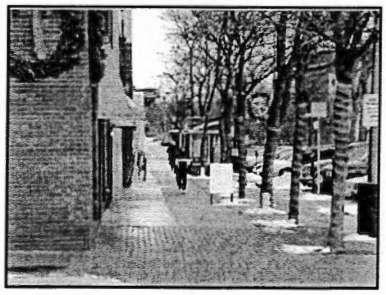
Street Environment As Primary Civic Space

The street is the primary civic space in the built environment. The organization and design of streets largely determine the physical form of the city. The character of the street and the way public and private spaces relate to the street and sidewalk express community values and how the street should be used.

Organization of Public Spaces

Sense of Enclosure

A sense of enclosure within public spaces is an important element in creating an attractive pedestrian environment and defining the character of an urban setting. A sense of enclosure is produced by continuous exterior walls of buildings extending to the property line and framing the street space to form an interior wall of the streetscape. When these walls are fragmented, there is no continuity, and the space lacks definition. The urban character of the area is then lost and a "sense of place," comfort, and security for the pedestrian cannot be created.



A sense of enclosure creates an attractive pedestrian environment.

Building setback is one of the defining characteristics of an urban district. Most of the buildings in the Commerce Center and Old Town are built up to the front property line, which is desirable for walkable commercial districts. Other districts such as Durant Park Village and Reutter Park also share fairly consistent building setbacks within the districts. Building setbacks within each district should be located at a uniform depth from the street. To encourage pedestrian movement, these setbacks should be as narrow as possible.

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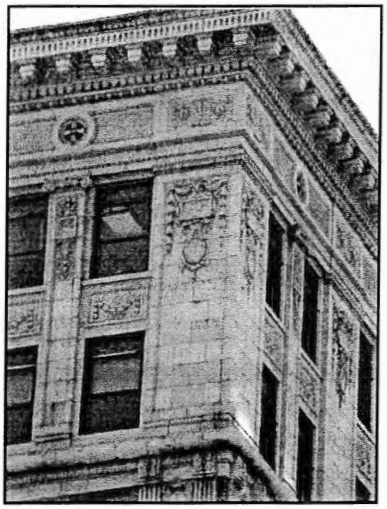
Historic Buildings

A "sense of arrival" provides the identity of each district by the character of the district itself. This identity depends heavily on when the district was constructed, which in turn influenced building function, materials, and style. The preservation of buildings within a district thus reinforces a district's identity, and helps to provide a "sense of arrival."



Prudden Building

Preservation coordinates well with the City efforts to provide future way-finding improvements to direct visitors more effectively to Central Lansing attractions, and with recent street lighting improvements to enhance Central Lansing's historic character. Moreover, both state and federal tax laws currently offer investment tax credits for the restoration of historic buildings.

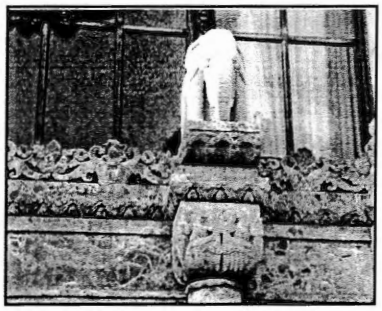
Building facades should respect the historic character of the buildings. Buildings should be restored with traditional architectural elements appropriate to the period and style in which they were built. Facade treatments other than restoration should be discouraged until all preservation options have been explored.

Adaptive Reuse and Infill Construction

Infill construction should respect the proportion, relationship to the street, building materials, and roof forms of nearby historic buildings. Adaptive reuse of buildings and infill development near the Grand River should be oriented toward the river as well as the street.

Pedestrian Scale

Buildings which are interesting up-close attract the pedestrian. Frequent windows, window displays and entrances all encourage window shopping. Buildings should be interesting close-up, as well as from a distance.



Comerica

Movement and sound create interest for the pedestrian, and enhance the perception of street activity. Banners, flags, windsocks, canvas awnings, and trees all provide wind-powered movement and sound. Water features attract the pedestrian with sensory input for all five senses.

Signage

Signs on private property can contribute to or detract from the character of a district and the way-finding system within a community. Too many signs placed randomly in the streetscape create an impression of clutter and low quality. Signs that are too large or too numerous dominate views within the city. For effective use of signage on private property, signs should be consistently

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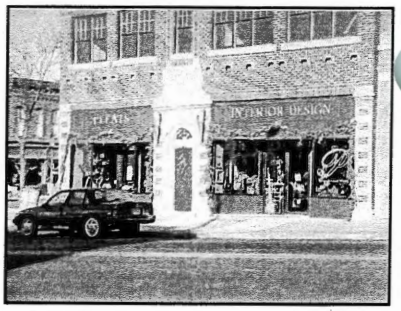
located in the same place on different properties. Signs should only be large enough to communicate essential information of business identification. Sign materials, letter forms and typeface should complement the architecture of the building especially in areas with historic architecture. Window signs should be limited and views into and out of businesses should be encouraged. Storefronts should be artfully arranged to advertise merchandise without the use of signs.



Billboards

The City's efforts to minimize the negative impacts of billboards should be encouraged. The adjacent photo of the billboard is located at a primary gateway into Central Lansing. Billboards should not be allowed within Central Lansing due to the mix of residential uses proposed, the historic character of the Capitol and Old Town Districts, and a need to enhance the entrance to downtown by eliminating billboards in these areas.

Billboards should be prohibited in Central Lansing

Two-way Street Character

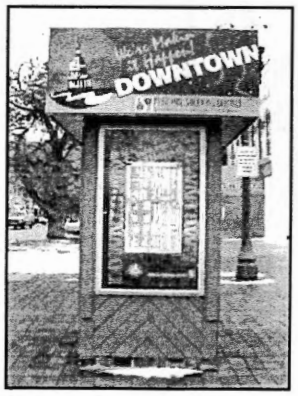
Several changes in design are proposed along with the change in traffic flow, to ensure that streets are sized and detailed to equally serve the needs of automobile, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic. Traffic lanes should be kept to a minimum number and width to discourage high-speed through traffic and encourage the flow of low-speed local traffic.

On-street parking should be provided on both sides of the streets wherever possible. This will provide additional parking and create a protective physical and psychological barrier between auto traffic and pedestrians.

In commercial districts, both sides of the roadways should provide a street furniture zone which contains shade trees and an unobstructed sidewalk. Ideally, the street furniture zone should be a minimum width of five feet and the unobstructed sidewalk would be a minimum width of eight feet. Any streetscape design should ensure that the street is attractive and provides for pedestrian comforts.

Way-finding

A way-finding system encourages people to use downtown for a variety of activities by making it easier for them, by taking the fear of getting lost out of their trip, and by informing them of destinations they might not know about. Although the changes in traffic patterns will facilitate way-finding in Central Lansing, a well designed, integrated, color-coded system of signs, maps, information kiosks, landmarks and public spaces will help people find their way from



Information kiosks help people find their way from one place to another.

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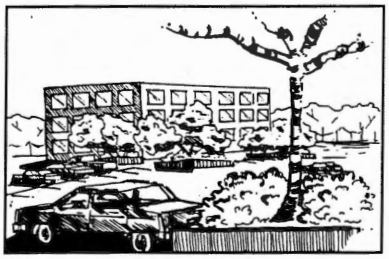
one destination to another. This is especially important because market research shows that currently many people use Central Lansing for a single purpose, such as work, but not for other activities. One solution to this problem is to make it easier to circulate among several destinations.

Downtown is particularly suited for multiple destination activities due to the clustering of land uses in close proximity to each other. The way-finding system should direct people to the various districts and their attractions, and to the River Trail. It should also serve people who have vision problems and should be tailored for international guests. A critical aspect of the way-finding system will be a system of location signs for parking and transit stops.

Parking Design

Parking must not be a negative and frustrating experience. Parking facilities should be of a scale that is consistent with the character of its surroundings. Adequate landscaping, lighting and locational signage will improve the aesthetics and enhance the experience of parking in Central Lansing.



Large parking lot interiors should feature landscaping islands and shade trees.

Surface parking lots should be located behind buildings, and have a landscape strip between the sidewalk and pavement at least five feet wide. Shade trees and landscape plantings a maximum height of three feet tall should be planted in the strip to enhance the look and comfort of the parking without blocking views to or from the lot. The parking lot interior should have shade trees and landscape islands to break up any expanses of pavement. Maximum limits should be placed on the number of surface parking spaces on each site to prevent the intrusion of large parking lots as a land use.

Parking structures can reflect the character of surrounding structures.

Parking structures should have a front yard setback similar to that of adjacent structures, and should be landscaped where possible to soften the impact of the structure on the street environment. A storefront on the ground floor should be incorporated to enliven the street and allow building to the right-of-way line.

Transit Stops

The appearance and accessibility of a transit stop has a great effect on the use of public transit. Bus stops send a message about public space and the City's identity. They should be perceived as part of the environment and follow a consistent design theme. There are different levels of stops in relation to the types of amenities that are provided. However, each bus stop should contain welcoming elements to enhance the riders' experience.

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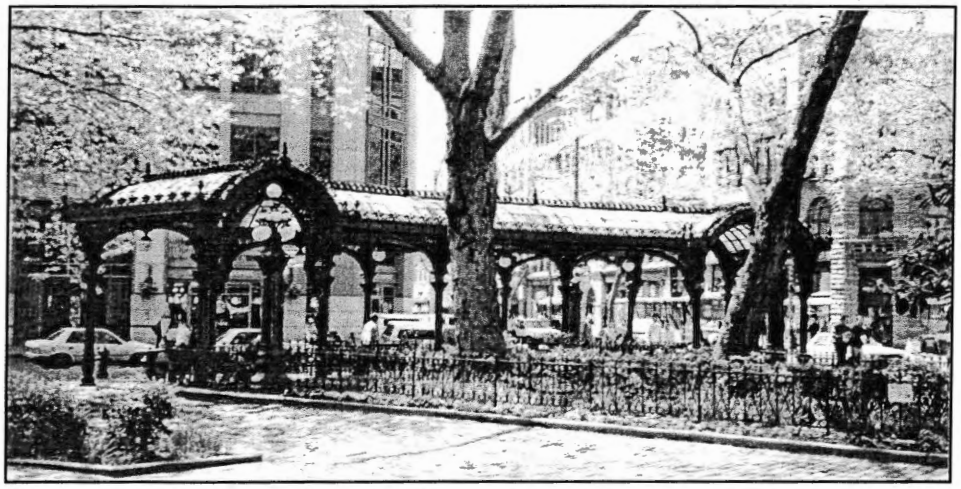
The design of stops with shelters should complement the surrounding area. Shelters can have multiple uses. Bike racks, drinking fountains, emergency phones, directional maps, trash cans and flower planters should be considered for amenities at a majority of the stops. Safety is also a factor. Therefore, stops should be well lighted, easy to find, and attractive features in the cityscape.

Extensive consideration should be given to transit stop enhancement as part of the City's public improvements. This type of investment will increase ridership and make Central Lansing more appealing to residents and workers.



The design of transit shelters should complement the surrounding area.

Redevelopment Opportunities

Proposed Performing and Visual Arts Center

The feasibility of a performing arts center is currently being analyzed as part of a separate Performing Arts Center Feasibility Study. Potential sites will be evaluated as part of this study. A visual arts component should be included to enable Lansing to attract large art and museum exhibits.

If determined feasible, this Plan would support locating this facility in the Entertainment Complex of the Commerce Center because of its significant contribution to the vitality of the entire City. Location of the center outside the Commerce Center and especially outside Central Lansing would be a lost opportunity to intensify the critical mass of activity necessary, create a more pedestrian and transit oriented downtown, and increase the vitality of the area.

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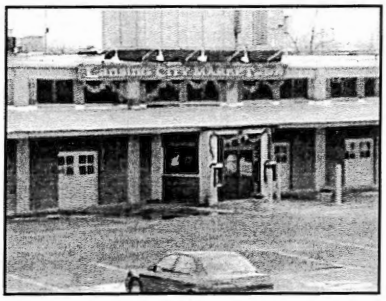
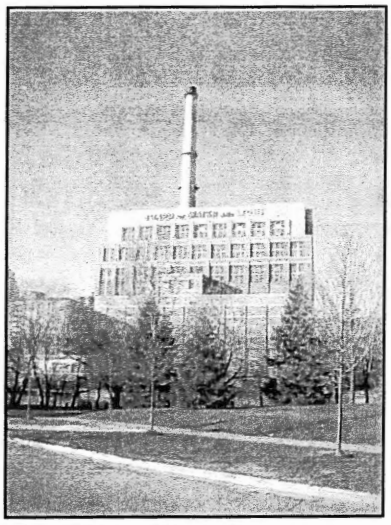
City Market



This site has great potential for many different uses that would contribute to the Commerce Center due to its visibility, central location on the river, and proximity to the stadium and Lansing Center. The site design should respond directly to the river and surrounding attractions. The site could be renovated and expanded as a full service farmers market with cafes and seasonal retail. Hours of operation should be adjusted to improve the market's availability to the shopping public. A sophisticated pedestrian promenade and plaza should be created in association with this expansion and should be developed in coordination with other riverfront improvements.

Board of Water and Light Building

(Ottawa Street Power Station)



The Ottawa Street Power Station should be preserved through adaptive reuse.

The Board of Water and Light building is a landmark situated on a prime centrally located site. This historic building should be preserved through adaptive reuse. Reuse considerations vary from an entertainment facility to residential and office loft spaces. Any redevelopment scenario considered for this site should include improvements for the riverfront that capitalize on creating a significant people place on the river between Michigan Avenue and Shiawassee Street.

Riverfront City Parking Lot Site

(South Grand Avenue between Washtenaw and Kalamazoo Streets)

The site, near the Washington Avenue retail area and the CATA Transportation Center, is pivotal to providing an adequate parking supply on the south side of downtown. However, it has potential to be much more than a surface parking lot on riverfront property. Due to its central location, this site has potential for redevelopment as a mixed use, housing or a civic building with a strong orientation to the river. However, parking will be a necessary component of the land use on this site, and should accommodate existing and future parking demands. Any future development of this site should be designed to provide riverfront amenities and the potential for a pedestrian bridge across the river.

Orient buildings toward the waterfront.

South Grand Parking Structure

(on Grand Avenue between Washtenaw Street and Michigan Avenue)

This structure is located at the intersection of Grand Avenue and Allegan Street. The site has a good location. It is on the western bank of the river, one block east of the Washington Avenue retail area, one block south of Michigan Avenue, and two blocks from the CATA Transportation Center. This site has long-term potential for redevelopment as housing or as a mixed use office building with a

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strong orientation to the river. Structured parking should be a component in the development, but should not negatively impact the waterfront or the streetscape as the existing building does. A link should be an integral part of the project.

Additional Redevelopment Opportunities

Central Lansing has unique assets that offer these additional opportunities:

- To adapt vacant industrial, office, or storage space for residential use.
- To construct mixed-use infill development on the larger surface parking lots. Such developments could include parking above or below street-level commercial/office uses, and loft or penthouse residential units in the upper floors.
- To preserve the historic character that is an important feature in all districts.
- To preserve important vistas of the Capitol, the downtown skyline, and the riverfront.
- To market and develop properties with such vistas in accordance with this Plan.
- To provide connections for properties developed adjacent to the river.

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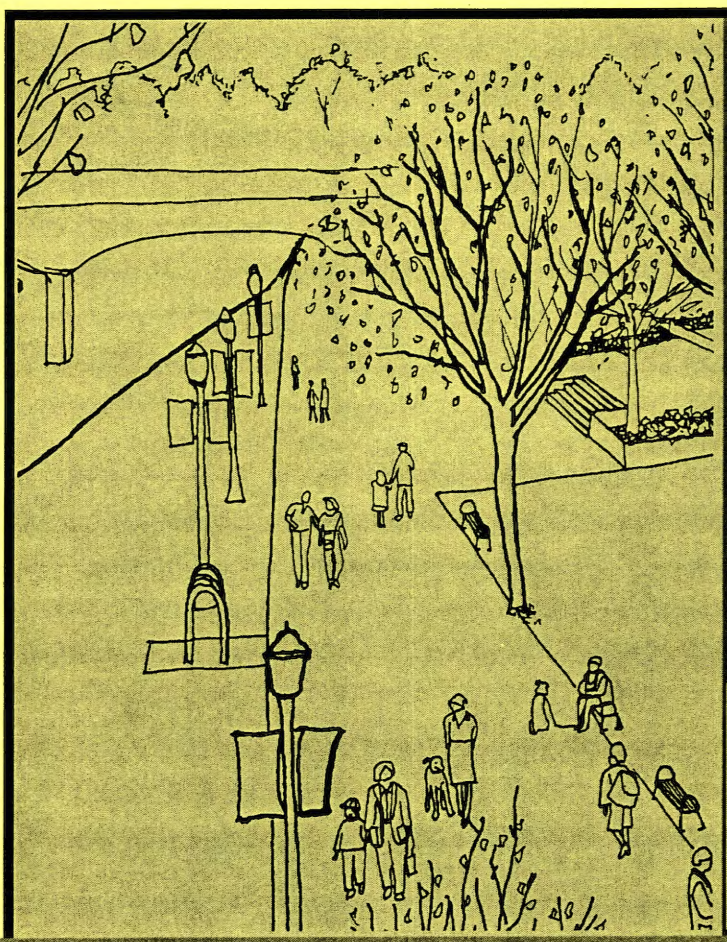
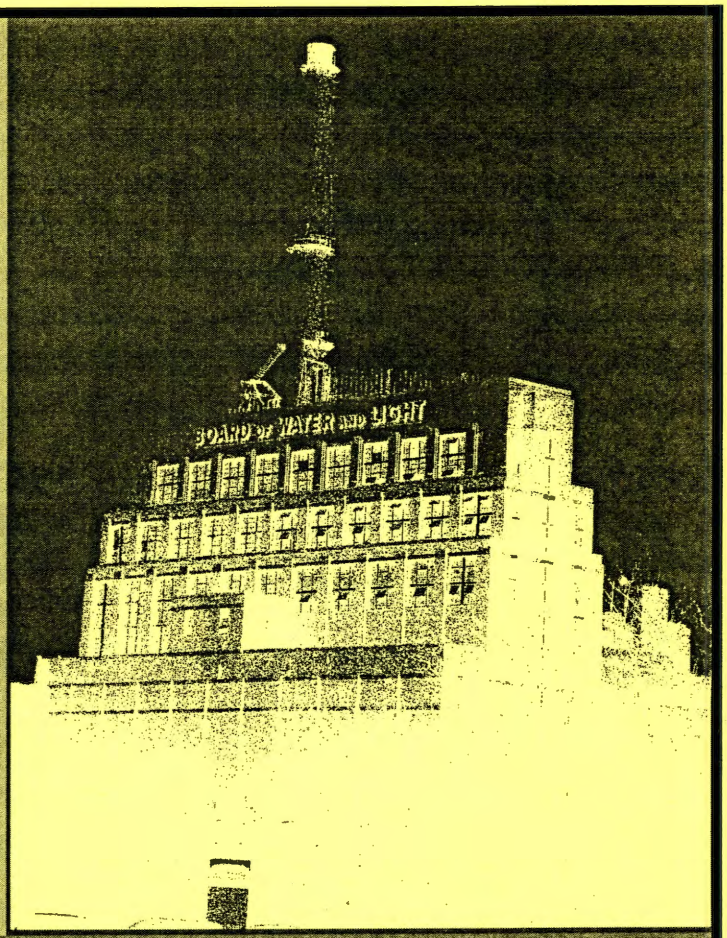
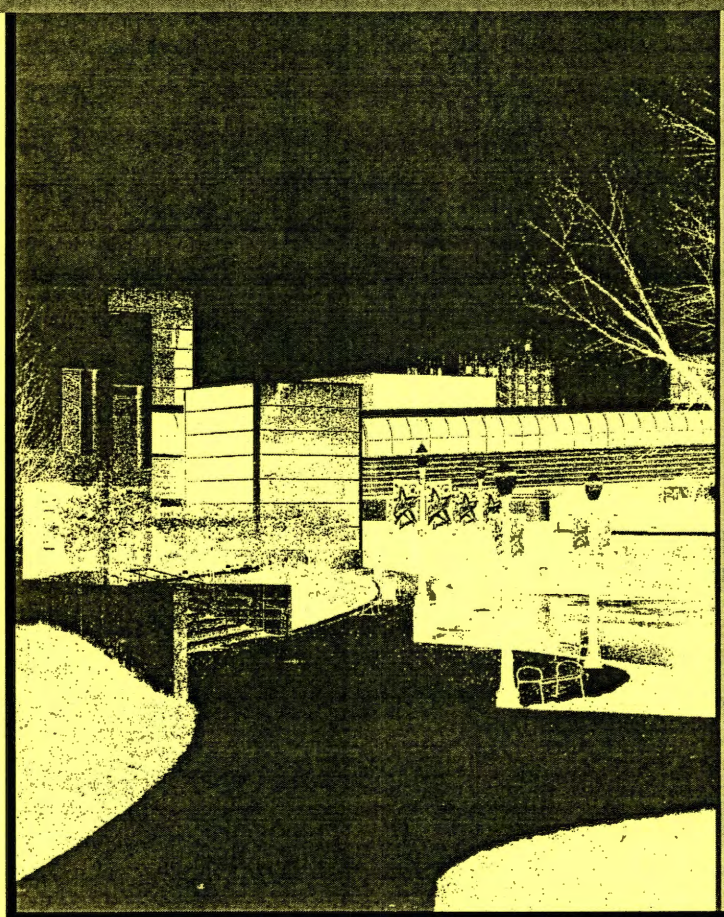




Section V - CENTRAL LANSING PLANNING DISTRICT RECOMMENDATIONS



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SECTION V
CENTRAL LANSING DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Section V focuses on the individual districts which have been identified. Each of these districts have certain elements in common which have been addressed in the previous chapter. These districts also have distinct characteristics which necessitate additional analysis and individualized recommendations. Section V contains a discussion of each of the districts accompanied by a map.

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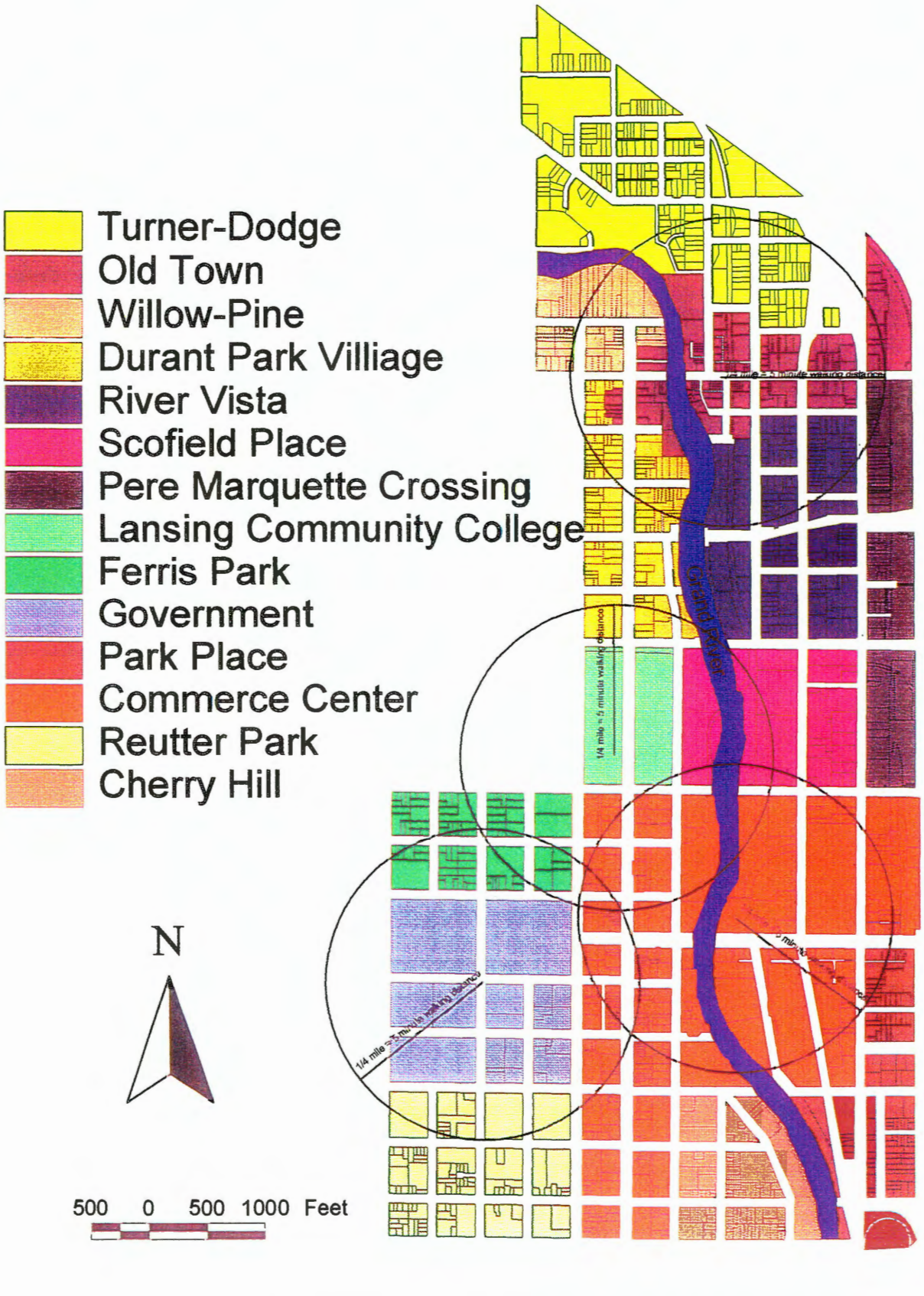
CENTRAL LANSING DISTRICTS



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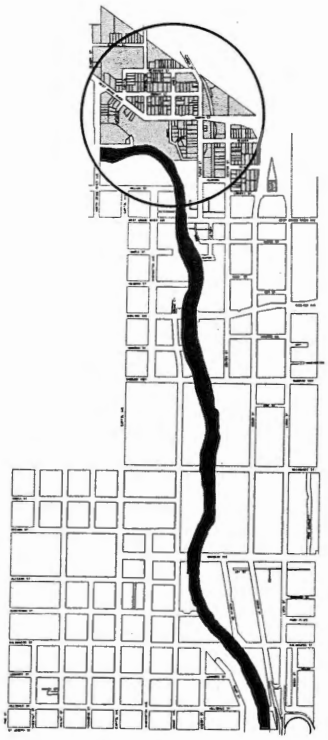
Turner-Dodge



1/4 mile radius = 5 minute walking distance

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Turner-Dodge

The *Turner-Dodge* area was first laid out by Fred Bushell in 1936 and included in the original settlement of North Lansing known as "Lower Town." The southern section was located within the city limits when Lansing was incorporated in 1859. The area remained undeveloped until the estates of James Turner and Dwight Smith were subdivided about 1895. This coincided with increased railroad activity and the development of nearby industries.

The area is bounded by the railroad tracks on the north and east boundaries, N. Grand River on the west, the Grand River and Clinton Street on the south.

Land Use

The area is primarily residential, with light industry, commercial uses and public open spaces. Detached single family homes comprise the several blocks west of Turner and north of E. North Street. Reasoner Park, a large neighborhood park could serve additional residents from infill housing.

The area south of E. North Street, east of James Street to the CSX Railroad is currently a mix of residential and light industrial. Rezoning the west side of Turner Street, north of Clinton (retaining a commercial intersection) to residential would enhance and provide an aesthetic transition immediately north of the Historic Commercial District.

Activities that promote and encourage use of the *Turner-Dodge Park* for passive recreation (i.e. concerts, art fairs, lawn bowling) add to the ambience of this historic area and should be increased in the tourist season. More active, neighborhood recreation (i.e. ball games) should take place directly west of N. Grand River Avenue and in Reasoner Park.

Urban Design

Part of the appeal of this area is the close proximity to a historic commercial district, shopping, services, cultural attractions and the recreational opportunities along the River Trail.

Perhaps the most significant property within this area is the *Turner-Dodge House* and *Park*. The relationship between the House and its site is a unique one in contemporary urban settings where most historic homes sit on narrow lots. The 8,600 square foot, three-story brick Colonial Revival house is a landmark structure listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Situated forty feet above the Grand River, this stately mansion provides a view of Lansing's downtown skyline including the Capitol dome. It serves as a site for the interpretation of local history and as a Cultural Heritage Center recognizing the contributions of Lansing's diverse community.

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The nine acres of park land surrounding the House are part of James Turner's original estate. An ornamental beech tree, located east of the House, is eligible for recognition as a National Heritage Tree. The future development of the *Turner-Dodge House* and *Park* should be based upon site research from 1900 to maturity in the mid 1920's. This includes: the proposed reconstruction of the historic gardens, carriage house and other outbuildings as an interpretive/orientation center with educational programs; the re-establishment of the porte-cochere function; and the re-installation of street tree plantings and lighting for enhancement and historical integrity. Care should be taken not to overdevelop the site or create a false history (i.e. historic village setting). Protection, Preservation and restoration of this historic property should be undertaken in accordance with the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation Projects.

The park is a northern anchor for the River Trail, and forms a transition between adjacent residential districts to the north and west with downtown districts, all of which are within easy walking distance. A plan which addresses both the beautification of the eroding riverbank behind the House and recreational access to the Grand River should be developed.

Revitalization plans or improvements in the *Turner-Dodge* neighborhood area should maintain a zone of historic integrity as it relates to the immediate residential and adjacent historic commercial district to the southeast.

Stabilization and establishment of a traditional neighborhood north of the *Turner-Dodge Park* can be encouraged with single family residential infill compatible with the existing residential structures, characterized by simple one and two story Folk Victorians and small bungalows, dating from 1875 to the 1920's.

The Willow-Pine Area Plan, which overlaps this downtown district, recommended a North Lansing Historical District which included properties west from Center Street to Emerson Street and between the Grand River and North Street.

Circulation

The *Turner-Dodge* neighborhood is the northern transitional gateway to the Old Town commercial center and downtown. The River Trail and trolley should provide convenient access from Old Town amenities (entertainment, cultural activities and services) to the downtown center. A pedestrian and bicycle orientation should be encouraged in this activity center. Improved linkages along with the use of different forms of transportation should be encouraged from the northern section of the district to the downtown district.

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North Street, a minor arterial which supports considerable truck traffic, truncates a several-block residential area on the north from the attractive conveniences immediately south. The neighborhood north of North Street between Capitol Avenue and Turner Street should be evaluated for traffic calming recommendations. Another focus area for traffic calming is at Clinton and Center Streets which are affected by the proximity of entertainment facilities.

A public transportation shelter with a designed environment that incorporates a welcoming element, improved accessibility, and a visual appearance that complements the surrounding area should be developed at the intersection of North and Turner Streets.

Economic Development

A way-finding system which facilitates discovery and also promotes the assets of historic and commercial districts (e.g. "Entering Historic District") is recommended for this district.

Restoration, sensitive rehabilitation and infill of residential areas can increase the economic benefit to the area. Priority should be given to the protection and preservation of the area's residential character and especially of those significant properties along Center Street.

Parking

Special functions and community events are sponsored at the *Turner-Dodge Park* and along Turner Street, impacting residential streets in the evening and on weekends when residents are home. Consideration should be given to shuttle systems from other parking lots to these destination activities.

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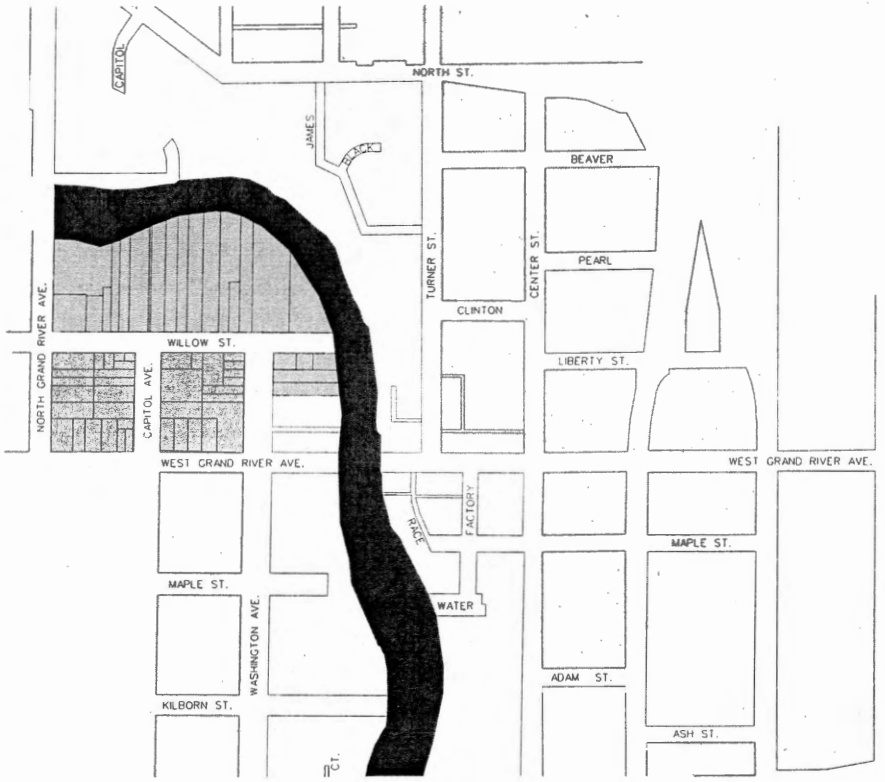
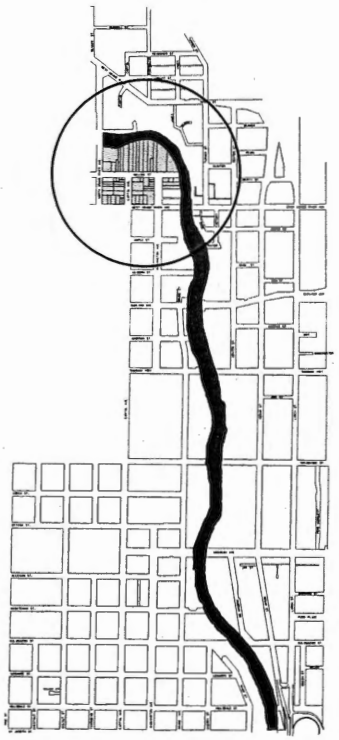
Willow-Pine





1/4 mile radius = 5 minute walking distance

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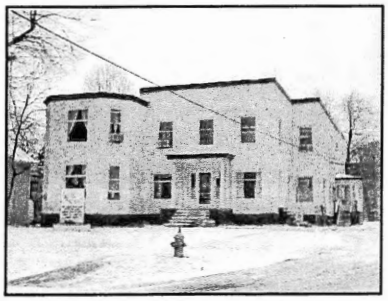
Willow-Pine

This district is bounded by Grand River Avenue, the Grand River and N. Grand River Avenue at the northeast corner of the 1992 *Willow-Pine* planning area. It is located to the west of theOld Town commercial district, and southeast of theWillow and North Grand River commercial area.



Capital Area Community Services Building

Historically, the area located behind the Capital Area Community Services Building (Newbro House) is the site of the Pottawatomi Indian gardens. Early settlers to North Lansing/Lower Town found numerous Indians in this area, and they continued to live side by side for some time. The most famous Indian from this time was Chief Okemos who often camped along the river in the general area and frequently visited the home of North Lansing pioneer James Turner, Sr. during the 1850's.

North Presbyterian Church

Other sites of significance include the Newbro House, which was formerly the original St. Lawrence Catholic Hospital at 101 E. Willow Street and the Edwin B. Carrier House at 200 W. Willow Street, home to E. B. Carrier, one of the early Lansing merchants. The North Presbyterian Church, whose congregation was formed in 1863, is located at 102 W. Grand River Avenue.

Land Use

This five block area is primarily residential with commercial development located along N. Grand River Avenue at Willow and at W. Grand River Avenue.

The residential portion of the area is primarily comprised of single and two family homes. The commercial area along the east side of N. Grand River is developed with convenience oriented commercial development, including a fast food restaurant and drive-though party store. Property at the northeast corner of W. Grand River and North Grand River is zoned for general retail development.

Some of the properties adjacent to the river are in the 100 year flood plain, which places restrictions on additions and improvements on structures in this area.

Urban Design

This area along the south side of the Grand River will benefit from the development activity on the east side of the river in Old Town. Enhancements to development on this side of the river will also improve the views from Old Town. Additional landscaping of the parking lot at the Capital Area Community Services Building on W. Willow would help to enhance the area. Selective trimming of overgrown plant materials will open up views of the river. A restaurant along N. Grand River, just south of the river, has taken advantage of the riverfront for outdoor dining.

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The deep lots between Willow and the Grand River are underutilized and could be put to good use as a along the south side of the river to tie the two commercial areas together.

Historic preservation would be a good strategy to use in the improvement of properties, since this area features some of the oldest residential, commercial, and institutional properties in Lansing.

Circulation

All streets are two-way in this area. North Grand River and West Grand River Avenues function as collector streets and truck routes. The remainder are classified as local streets.

Willow Street, which dead-ends at the Grand River, should have some form of turn-around for better circulation. The intersection where W. Grand River Avenue meets N. Seymour was formerly identified as a confusing intersection; it is now a four-way stop, which seems to function better.

CATA buses service this area. A bus shelter may be helpful in the commercial area, particularly in the Willow Street-N. Grand River Avenue commercial area.

Parking

Parking in this area is mostly residential in nature, associated with the single and two family homes. The parking lot for the North Presbyterian Church does not accommodate all the parking needs of the church, but adequate on-street parking exists for the Church during its peak hours.

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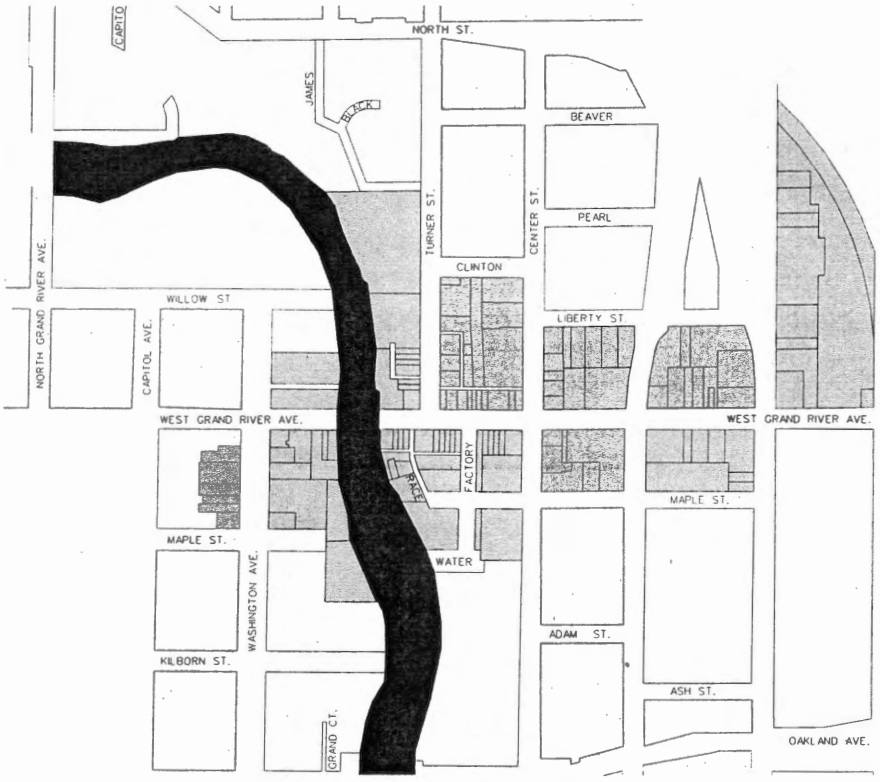
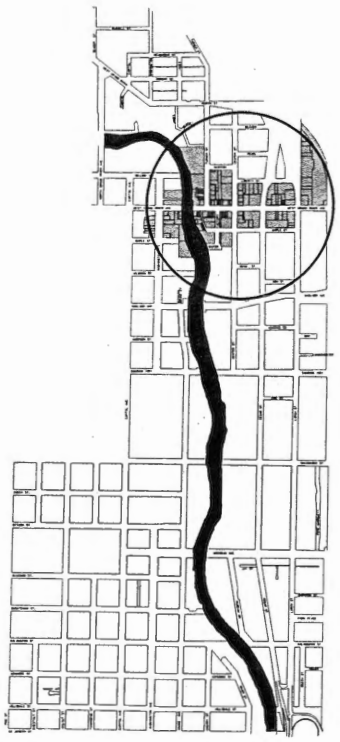
Old Town





1/4 mile radius = 5 minute walking distance

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Old Town

Old Town has a unique blend of history, tradition and vision. Located on Grand River Avenue and Turner Street and bounded on the west by Washington Avenue and on the east by Larch/Cedar Streets, *Old Town* is where Lansing's past, its vitality and its hope for the future are most clearly seen.

The Greater Lansing Visitors' Bureau, Old Town

Home to several art galleries, restaurants and specialty shops, *Old Town* offers great opportunity for further redevelopment. However as the area restructures it is essential that a harmonious balance of historic preservation, commercial development and residential use be established and maintained. If *Old Town* is to remain a genuine community, it must not be allowed to become a kind of gentrified theme park.

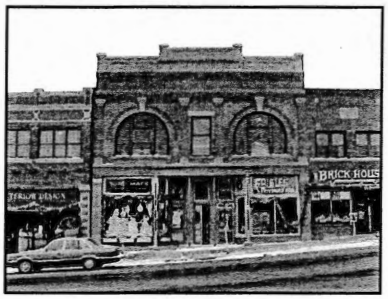
As part of the larger city of Lansing, *Old Town* must maintain links to downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods. Currently the River Walk helps establish such linkage, but more links are needed. Trolley service from the North Lansing Comfort Station to the Ottawa Street Power Station along the abandoned railroad right-of-way had been a long-term aspiration, however a more practical alternative is a rubber tired trolley that would include in its route the Washington Avenue corridor and the Lansing Community College campus.

In addition, enhanced pedestrian walkways and bicycle lanes connecting *Old Town* with central downtown will do much to encourage *Old Town's* continued vitality.

Close to the Turner Dodge neighborhood, Lansing Community College, the River Walk, the downtown business district, the Adado Riverfront park, the Brenke Fish Ladder, Oldsmobile Park, and the Lansing Center, *Old Town* is proving to be an attractive, safe, exciting and convenient place in which to live, work, shop and play.

Land Use

According to research conducted for this plan, a growing number of people want to be entertained by a unique shopping experience and live in an authentic community with a village center. The *Old Town* area should thus continue to function as a living neighborhood, with opportunities not only for tourism, but also for the basic shopping needs of its residents.



Street front, floor level space should be used for retail, with residential space on upper levels.

Old Town has a lot of potential for future commercial re-development, particularly with increased residential development in the area. Along with art galleries, and restaurants, entertainment and destination uses, the variety of retailers should also include neighborhood services compatible with the growing residential base. The street front ground floor spaces of buildings should be

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primarily used for retail/commercial uses, with office, studio, or residential uses delegated to upper levels and non store-front locations.

Urban Design

The design of the *Old Town District* should enhance its unique character and identity by preserving and restoring the historic buildings in the concentrated retail area.

The historic character of the buildings in *Old Town* is of great economic value for creation of a mixed-use village center with an attractive historic image. To protect this historic character, design standards for storefront rehabilitation, new construction, and signage need to be codified in such a way that policy regarding value decisions are made by property owners and business establishments within the district.

The character of historic buildings should be preserved through implementation of guidelines for the design of rehabilitated buildings, restored buildings, and new construction that is near historic buildings (possibly through use of a special overlay zoning district). Storefronts should be restored with traditional architectural elements appropriate to the late nineteenth century such as a cornice spanning the storefront, transom panes, recessed entries, and large plate glass display windows. If awnings are used, they should be retractable canvas authentic to the period. Doorways should be recessed and should not impede pedestrian flow on the sidewalk. The artistic values and talents of the community should be expressed through storefront displays, eclectic interior decor, signage and public art.

Adaptive reuse of buildings and infill development in *Old Town* should respect the proportions, relationships to the street, building materials, and roof forms of the existing historic buildings. They should exhibit a stronger orientation to the river, a concentrated mixed-use core with retail on the ground floor, and office or residential space on upper floors, and supporting mixed density residential areas including loft conversions surrounding the core.

The Turner Street streetscape has recently been rebuilt into a more pedestrian friendly environment which involved installing new "Lansing Light" street lights and replacing street trees. This work also included new custom-made trash receptacles, new curbs, sidewalks, and decorative sidewalk patterns. These improvements were financed through a combination of matching funds and special assessments. Presently, the Old Town Commercial District's Main Street Program is working with City officials to continue these improvements into the 100 through 500 blocks of E. Grand River Avenue.

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The green space south of the Turner Street/Grand River Avenue intersection should be designed as a town square for special events, with surface parking to the south.

Circulation

The physical linkage between *Old Town* and the other districts should also be strengthened. A rubber-tired trolley should link *Old Town* with Lansing Community College and the Commerce Center, and connect with other transit routes. Burchard Park improvements should also focus on the linkage with other districts, and should be designed to enhance the gateway into *Old Town*.

A decorative roundabout at the intersection of Turner Street and Grand River Avenue could reinforce the gateway into *Old Town*, and eliminate the need for a traffic signal at that location. This very preliminary proposal should be studied and strongly considered in light of vehicular and pedestrian traffic movements.

Truck traffic should be minimized in the Old Town Commercial District to preserve its comfortable pedestrian scale. This traffic should be directed to Larch Street and other major thoroughfares.

Parking

A recent study of parking within the Old Town Commercial District indicates that if all the potential off street spaces were developed, the total number of parking spaces would be 1,591 or 99.5% of the number required by the *Zoning Code*. Specific areas for new off-street parking facilities are proposed (See "North Lansing/Old Town - Possible Sites for Parking Facilities" map on page 5-14).

A second study recommends operational alternatives to improve *Old Town's* parking situation while reducing the number of parking spaces required. This study also recommends an overlay district to address the unique parking characteristics of *Old Town*. More detail is contained in the parking section of this plan.

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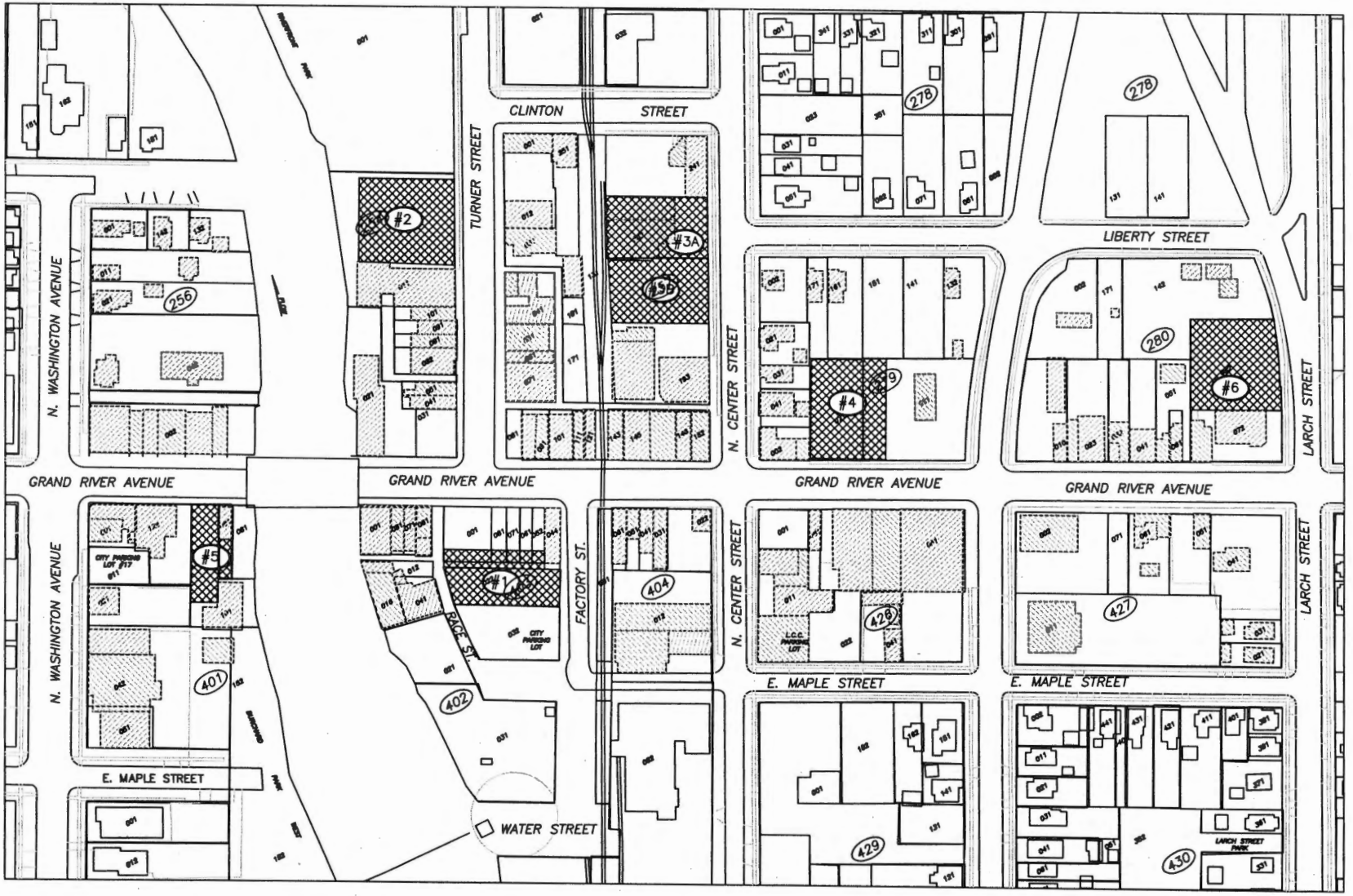
NORTH LANSING/OLDTOWN

POSSIBLE SITES FOR PARKING FACILITIES



DOCUMENT: NORTH LANSING/OLDTOWN PARKING REPORT, NOV. 1998

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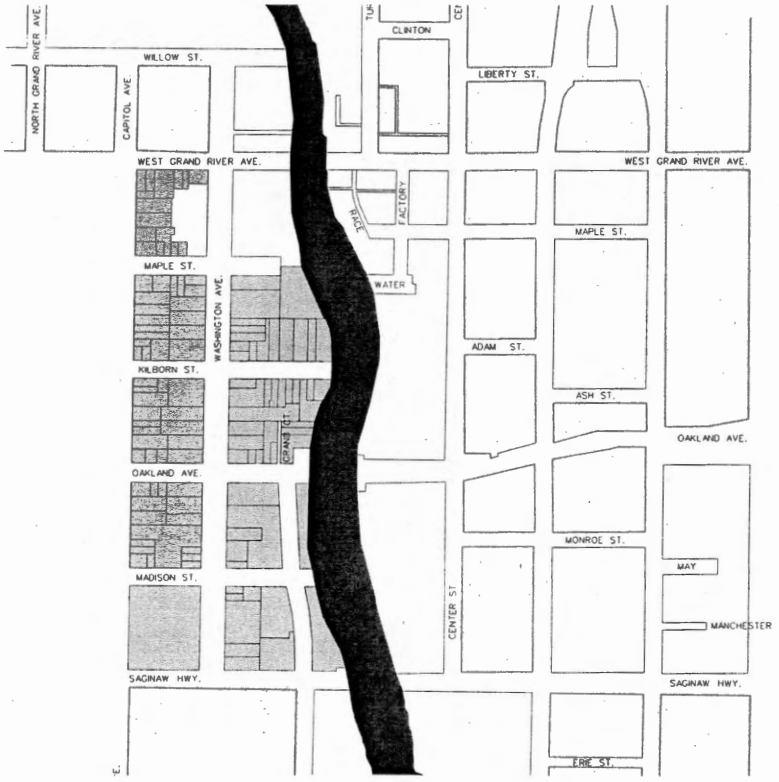
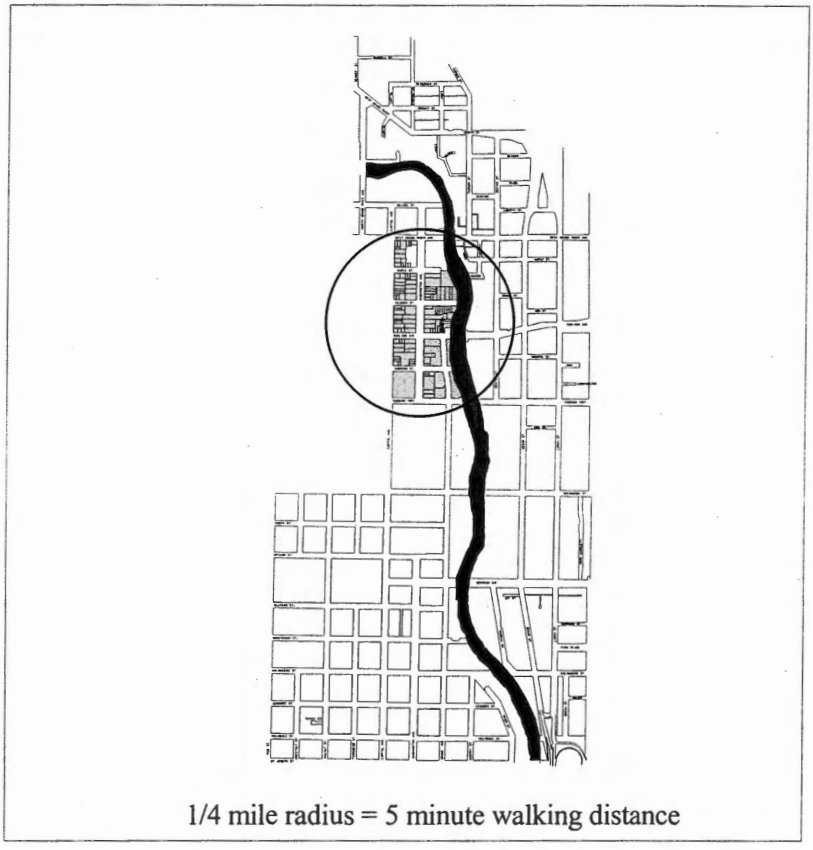
Durant Park Village





1/4 mile radius = 5 minute walking distance

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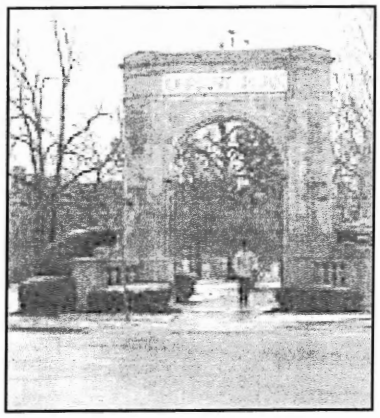
Durant Park Village



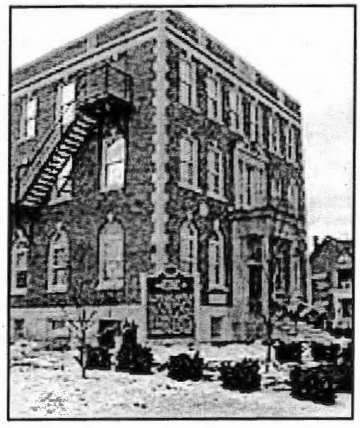
The *Durant Park Village* area is predominantly a mix of residential and office use with some retail. The area is dominated by imposing homes dating from the late 1800's and early 1900's, many of which have been converted to offices. It is within easy walking distance to the Old Town Historic Commercial District, the central downtown governmental, commercial and entertainment districts, Lansing Community College and the recreational opportunities of Adado Riverfront Park and the Grand River.

A focal point of the *Durant Park Village* area is the historic Durant Park. In 1921 automobile manufacturer, William C. Durant, purchased the block and gifted it to the city with sufficient endowment to benefit site development as a park. The rehabilitation of the 1920's era park, and the restoration and preservation of its Select Bedford Cut Stone arch with ornamental urns should be guided by the Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for the Rehabilitation of Cultural and Historic Landscapes.

Land Use

Emphasis should be placed on a preservation-oriented rather than a redevelopment development approach to land use, with policy and programs designed to enhance, strengthen and stabilize the residential character of the area and its immediate environs. Between W. Grand River and Saginaw Street, many of the stately homes have been preserved and in most cases converted to office use or multi-unit residential.

Urban Design



Unimproved vacant lots interrupt the residentially-scaled streetscape south of Oakland Avenue. Infill construction should reflect the proportion, composition, materials, color, rhythm and relationship to the street (setbacks) of predominant structures in the block face.

In the 700 and 800 blocks of N. Washington Avenue, modern infill structures of glass and steel compete with the character of period wood and brick structures. Landscaping, street furniture and lighting of residential scale design character can help provide a relationship between the modern structures and their historic neighbors. Nineteenth century structures at the intersection of Capitol and Saginaw, and those north of Madison street and east of Capitol, should be rehabilitated or restored before further deterioration occurs.

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Programs that would improve the *Durant Park Village* area include: potential designation of historic districts; support of rehabilitation projects initiated by non-profit housing corporations and the Community Development Block Grant Program, particularly for adjacent areas; increased code enforcement; and neighborhood beautification and clean-up campaigns.

The street crossings at Oakland and Saginaw create barriers to pedestrian movement. The Oakland and Saginaw crossings provide high visibility opportunities, both for the area and as a gateway to the downtown center.

Within the Downtown Districts, Durant Park provides a more northerly complement to Reutter Park as a traditional urban public space. Design standards and policy should address the protection, preservation, restoration, rehabilitation and enhancement of the residential character and cultural landscape. Pedestrian level street lighting contributes to a sense of security and encourages neighborhood walkability.

Circulation

Streets west of the Grand River are recommended for conversion to two-way traffic, with no widening of the streets. A future study of Saginaw Street and Oakland Avenue crossings should be conducted to explore ways of improving pedestrian movement across these arterials.

Washington Avenue is excessively wide. An attractively designed center median would help to restore the residential scale and character of the street.

A trolley running from Old Town and along Washington Avenue through Durant Park Village is recommended link the north and south businesses, Lansing Community College, and other Central Lansing destinations.

The Willow-Pine Area Plan (1992) recommended the renaming of West Grand River Avenue to its historic name of Franklin Street in the blocks from Pine Street to Larch Street.

Durant Park Village also has good pedestrian access to the Westside Business District, outside of the boundaries of the study area.

Parking

The 700 block of Capitol Avenue at Madison exceeds parking capacity for the area with impact from LCC day classes and nearby restaurant lunch hours. There is no metered parking on either side of the 800 block of Washington Avenue. On-site business and residential parking should be located in improved rear yards.

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Shared off-street parking should be explored. Parking studies should be conducted to minimize a policy which may encourage the conversion of open spaces to parking to benefit adjacent businesses but which would interrupt the rhythm of the block face.

Economic Development

Large residential structures have been adapted for business or professional purposes retaining the compatible scale relationship with adjacent residential use structures. This promotes a cohesive overall design. Cooperative improvement projects between residential and business segments help to create a more interesting and "pedestrian friendly" village environment. Enhanced business facades, improved landscaping and hard surfacing of parking lots, as well as planned sensitive infill development, will benefit economic development of the area. Programs which provide incentives for the restoration of structures for residential or adaptive reuse should be developed and promoted. These include historic tax credit incentives, support for housing rehabilitation programs and/or the creation of Neighborhood Enterprise Zones.

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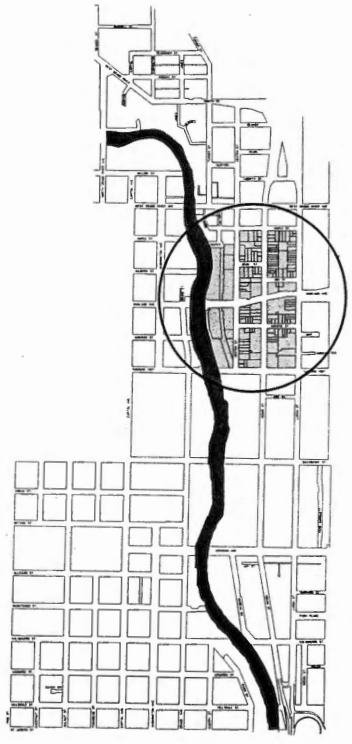
River Vista



1/4 mile radius = 5 minute walking distance

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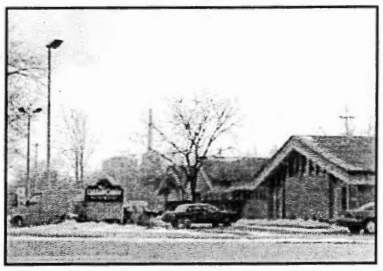
River Vista

River Vista, not unlike Scofield Place to the south, is envisioned to be a mixed use district with a stronger emphasis on housing. Bounded by Saginaw (south), the Grand River (west), Grand River Avenue/Franklin St. (North) and the CSX Railroad to the east, *River Vistas* must create the link between Old Town and downtown on the east side of the river.



Old Town has begun to take on the distinctive character necessary to attract new businesses and residents. The proximity to the Grand River and Old Town, and the ability to connect with downtown quickly and easily through proposed transit, pedestrian and vehicular means, give *River Vista* the ingredients necessary to develop medium to high density housing and associated commercial establishments.

Land Use

The Comprehensive Plan envisions that *River Vista* will provide the first opportunity in the city to establish a "transit village"; one in which trolley and/or bus commuting will be commonplace and desired by the people who choose to live there. Again, ease of pedestrian movement will be featured as will first floor businesses which cater to the local residents and the tourists coming to shop in Old Town.

As with Scofield Place, the Comprehensive Plan recognizes the specialized and more detailed planning which must occur to establish the land use relationships and circulation patterns necessary to promote appropriate development. Therefore, recommends that the *River Vista* district be designated for additional study and development of a future small area plan.

The Plan recommends that the River Vista district be designated for additional study and for the development of a future small area plan.

It should also be noted that to attract new development to this area and to take advantage of the river setting, other businesses which would discourage new growth in housing or commerce should be encouraged to seek alternative sites at which to operate that are not close to or are sufficiently screened from residential properties. While these businesses can perform valuable recycling functions, the operating characteristics of these businesses are not generally thought to be compatible with residential development.

Urban Design

River Vista provides the opportunity to construct more housing to support Old Town and downtown development. The primary challenges will be to design a community that is both compact but also open to the river, a community that maintains a pedestrian scale and cohesiveness among taller and more massive buildings, and that "fits in" with Old Town, Scofield Place, and the single family dwellings to the east without competing. Lastly, transit

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opportunities must be integrated into this community which support alternative transportation and circulation choices.

Circulation

A primary objective in creating a "transit village" is to establish enough housing units to support various alternative forms of transportation to work/shopping/education and entertainment activities. Trolley, bus, walking, bicycling and use of the River Trail are all choices which would be available to persons living in *River Vista*. In addition, the village would establish certain local neighborhood amenities and support services which would also serve existing Old Town and Turner Dodge residents.

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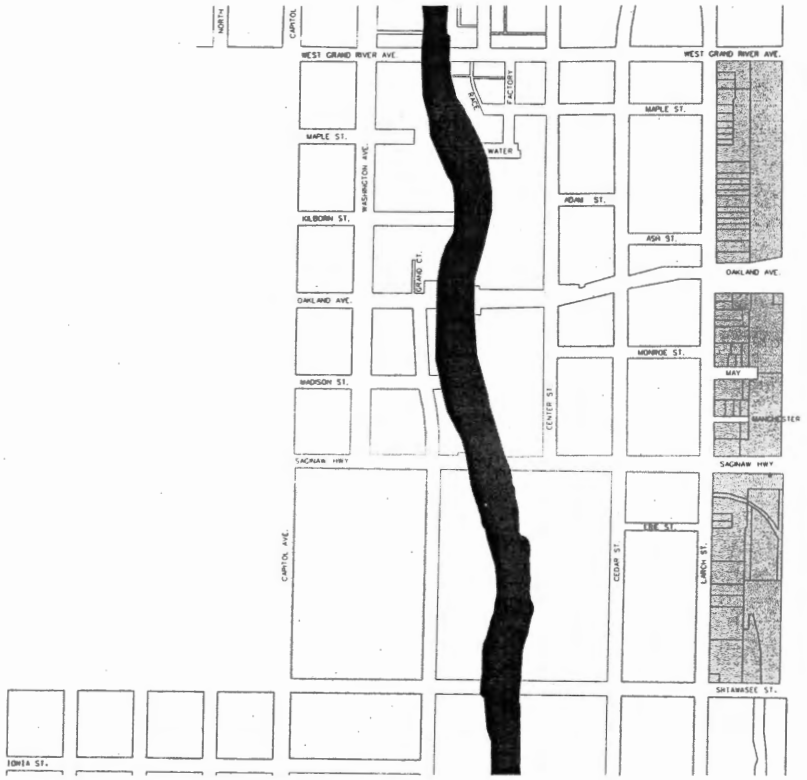
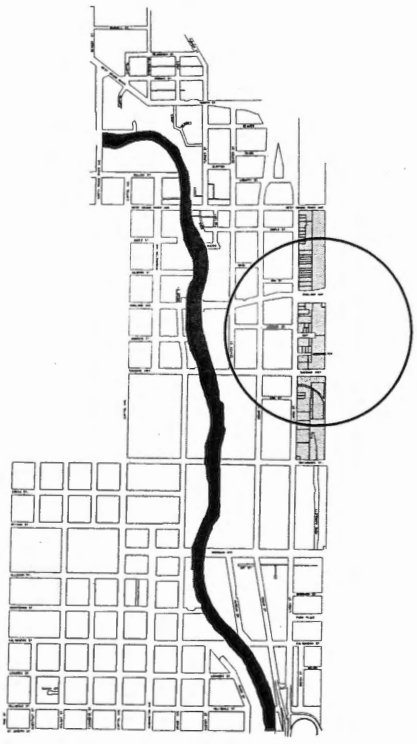
Pere Marquette Crossing





1/4 mile radius = 5 minute walking distance

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Pere Marquette Crossing

Pere Marquette Crossing is a narrow strip of land located between N. Larch Street to the west and the rail road tracks to the east, Shiawassee Street to the south and W. Grand River to the north. It has two distinct characters. Between Shiawassee and Oakland the land use is primarily commercial and light industrial. Between Oakland and W. Grand River the land use is residential, made up of single family homes, many of which have been divided into multiple units.

At one time the entire area was residential. Today, commercial and industrial uses dominate the area. Unfortunately, many of the residential buildings are in a distressed condition. These buildings are located between a busy rail line and Larch Street, a major traffic artery. This district is more suited to light industrial, including high technology uses.

Land Use

In the North-East Area Comprehensive Plan 1990 the land use in this area was designated for residential, industrial, commercial, and CBD support. After fifteen years, the city would be best served by designating the future land use in this area to light industrial, which better fits its location and character.

Circulation

The Plan recommends the conversion of Larch and Cedar Streets to two-way streets. North Larch is a major north/south route through the city. As envisioned, Larch Street would become a four-lane, two-way street, with center left-turn lanes added at the intersections. Driveway consolidation and access management will become important tools for the City to reduce unnecessary turning movements and prevent traffic congestion.

Urban Design

Larch Street is a gateway to the various districts in Central Lansing. As such, it has a large influence over the way in which the safety and quality of life in Central Lansing is perceived. Also, areas west of North Larch Street are designated for potential residential development. Every effort should be made to make the area attractive and inviting. Therefore, changes to the current city ordinances are recommended to mandate attractive screening and buffering in commercial and industrial areas.

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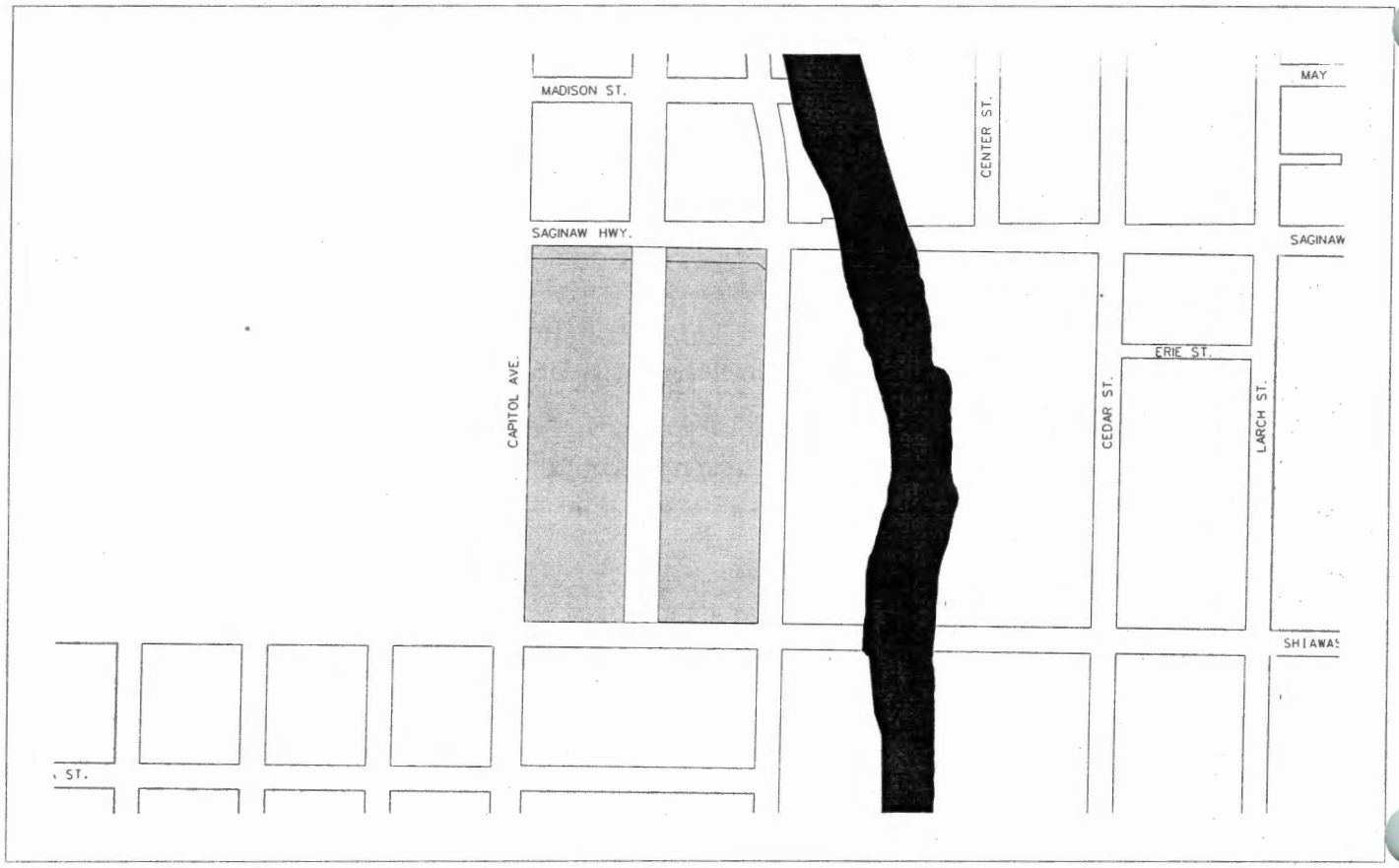
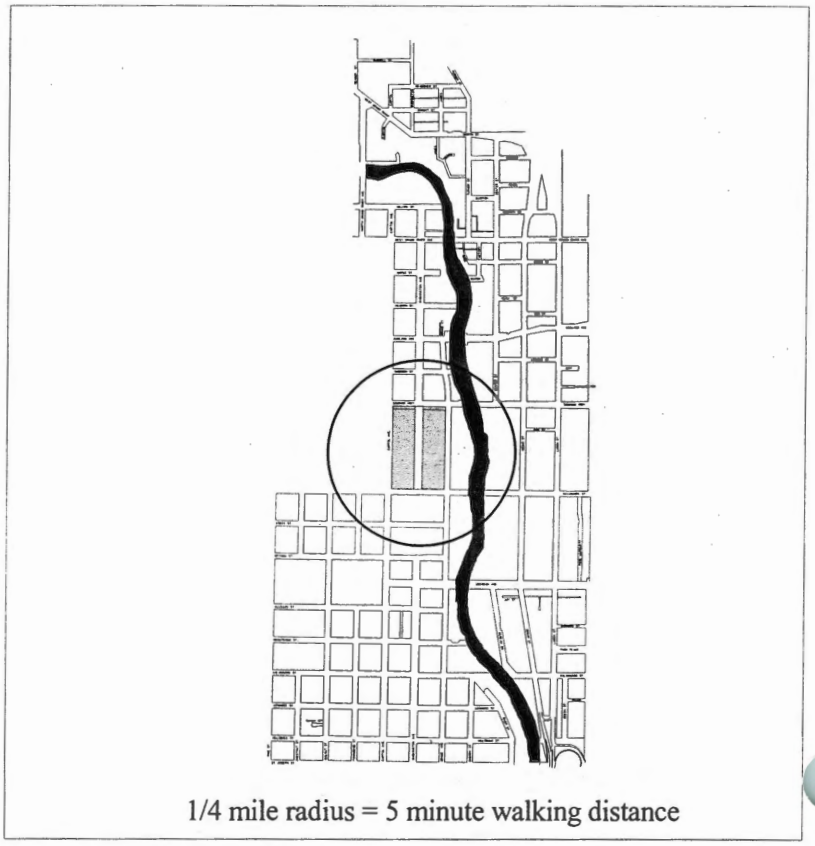
Lansing Community College





1/4 mile radius = 5 minute walking distance

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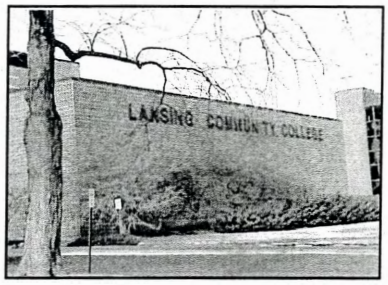
Lansing Community College

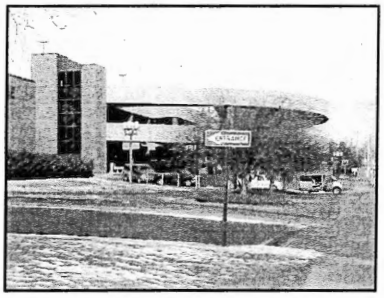
Lansing Community College is an urban college campus with seventeen structures ranging in size from 1,750 to 315,744 square feet built between the late 1880's and 1999. LCC serves approximately 15,900 students with services ranging from employment training and college prep to business development assistance.



Lansing Community College

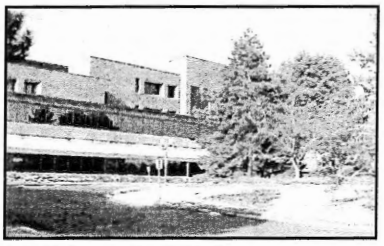
The LCC campus occupies the area bounded by Grand Avenue on the east, Capitol Avenue on the west, Saginaw on the north, and Shiawassee on the south, with additional buildings located on Capitol and Grand Avenues. The campus is bisected by the North Washington Mall, featuring an amphitheater in the middle of campus. A large berm crosses the Washington Mall at the north end of campus.

According to its Campus Master Plan, LCC desires a primary entry, or front door, at Shiawassee Street and the Washington Mall, with convenient drop off points for students, faculty, staff, and visitors. Other LCC development goals include:


LCC parking facility

- Enhance the pedestrian mall as a spatial organizing element.
- Maintain a visual terminus at the north end of campus.
- Move or reconfigure the outdoor amphitheater to support the shape and feel of the mall.
- Provide ample secure, convenient parking and ample green spaces.

To accommodate expansion, the campus plan lists several proposed building sites:


LCC from Grand Avenue

- The current site of Lansing's Fire Station #1, at the SW corner of Grand and Shiawassee,
- The current site of LCC's Continental Building, SW Corner of N. Washington Square and Shiawassee,
- The NE corner of Seymour and Genesee, stretching to Capitol Avenue,
- The SE corner of Capitol and Schoolcraft, the current site of the photography center,
- The east side of the Washington Mall, south of Lapeer Street (extended), the current site of the administration building.

The Central Lansing Comprehensive Plan's primary objectives related to the campus are to (1) create more connections between LCC and the surrounding districts, (2) create a circulation pattern that facilitates movement among the districts, and (3) improve the

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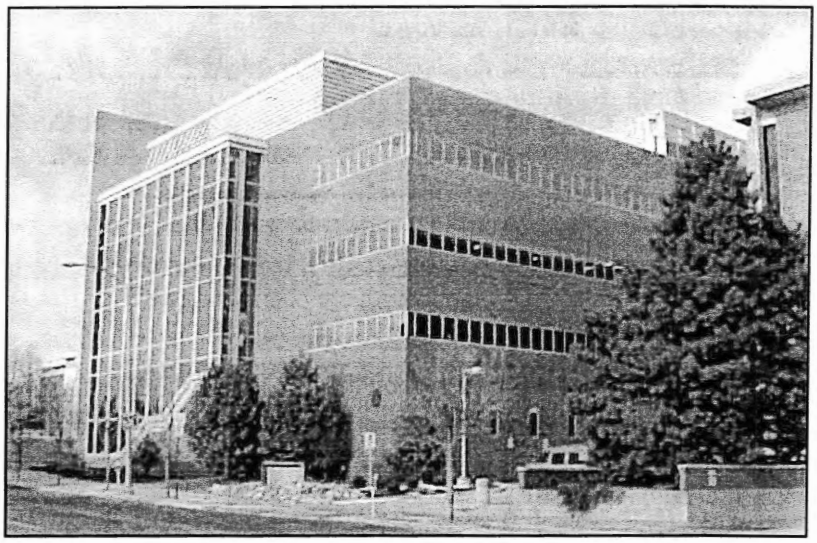
visual connections within and between districts. With careful design, the Central Lansing Comprehensive Plan objectives can be implemented with minimal impact on the College's development goals.



Lansing Community College Technology and Learning Center

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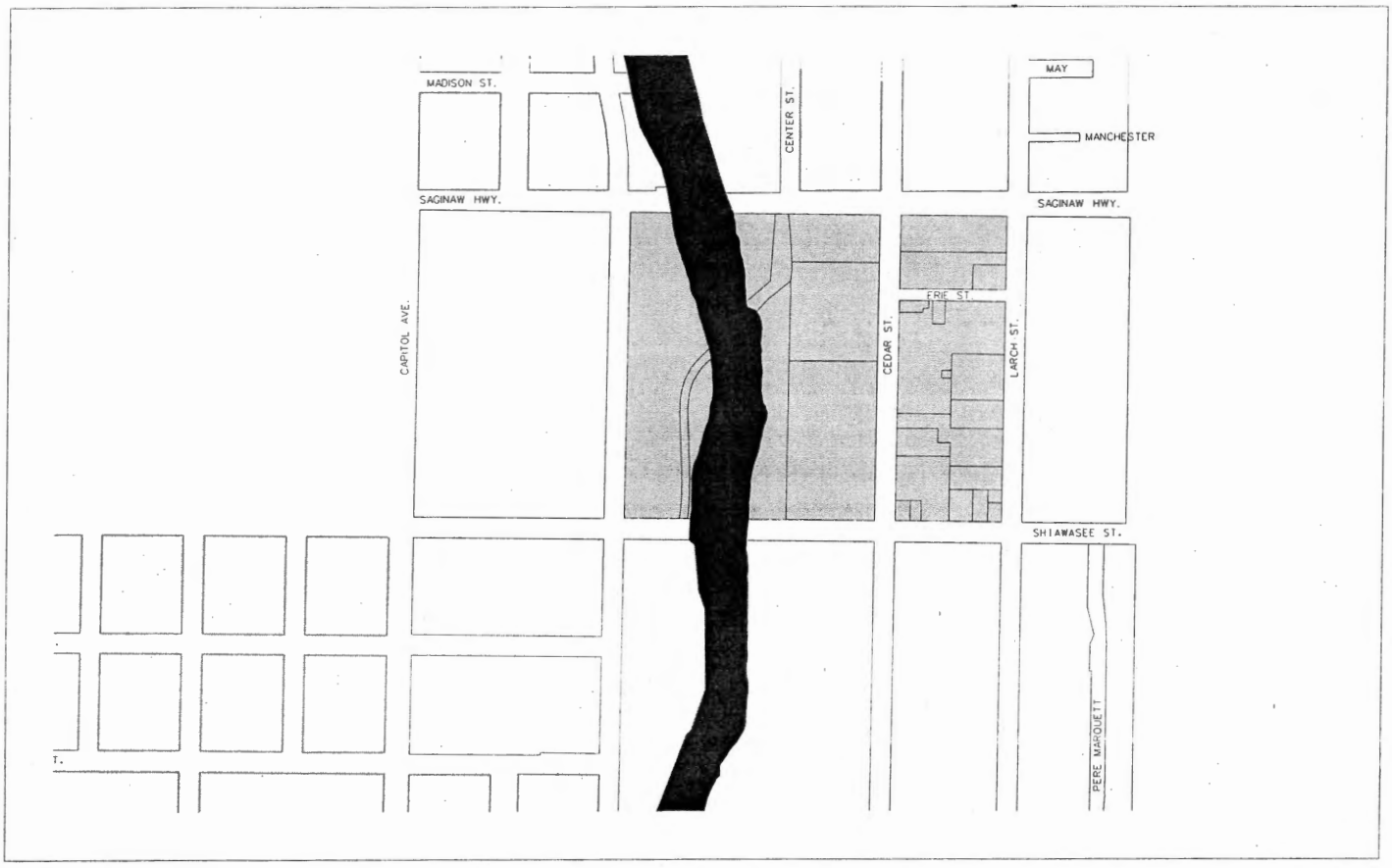
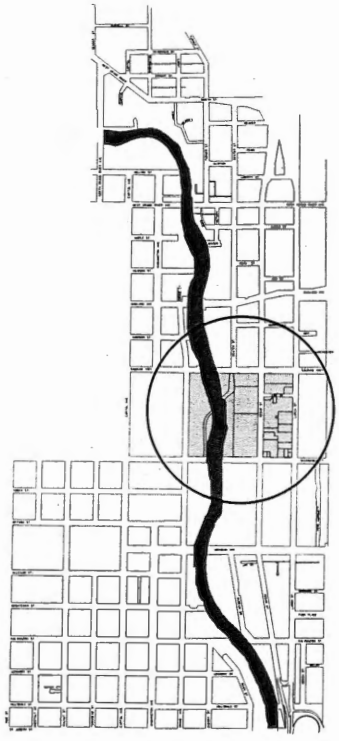
Scofield Place





1/4 mile radius = 5 minute walking distance

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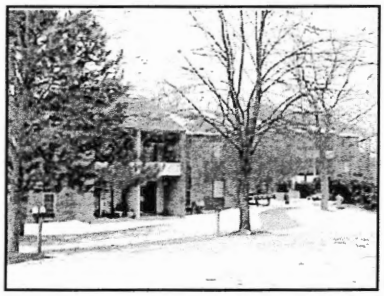
Scofield Place



Scofield Place is named for the largest single land owner in the area under the 1874 parcel map for the city of Lansing. Bounded by Shiawassee Street(south), Grand Avenue (west), Saginaw Street (north), and Larch Street (east), this area encompasses approximately 48 acres and contains a wide variety of land uses.

As with all of the small districts which lie in proximity to downtown, *Scofield Place* needs to develop a sense of identity, a sense of place, as a district that is a destination, a home, and a place to shop and work as well as a place with distinctive character, a memorable place which attracts residents and businesses where pedestrian traffic feels as comfortable as the vehicular traffic.

While the origins of *Scofield Place* may be residential, in the intervening years railroads, industrial zoning and neglect have modified the orientation of this area into a primarily nonresidential classification. Certainly many of the businesses in this area have located here to serve the downtown population of office workers. These same businesses already cater to the existing residential neighborhoods surrounding the downtown area. Having additional residential customers in the area would clearly enhance the viability of these businesses and lessen their dependence of a more distant customer base. It would also provide more retail opportunities with upper floor residential uses.

Land Use

The Comprehensive Plan envisions that *Scofield Place* would be such a mixed use district. It could contain housing, retail, office, and other support type services to the downtown area. It would be an area attractive to residents, shoppers, tourists, and businesses who want to live in and/or establish a business in an area with distinctive character, a safe environment, and superb urban design.

The Plan recommends that the Scofield Place district be designated for additional study and for the development of a future small area plan.

Since this concept has not yet been fully explored with interested businesses and residents of the area, The Plan recommends that an additional small area study to be completed which will more closely evaluate the particular land use arrangements and zoning classifications which may be needed to evolve the overall vision of *Scofield Place*. Such a small area plan would examine not only the land use relationships but also the proposed circulation changes for the Cedar/Larch Corridor and how that might interface with the land uses along the streets.

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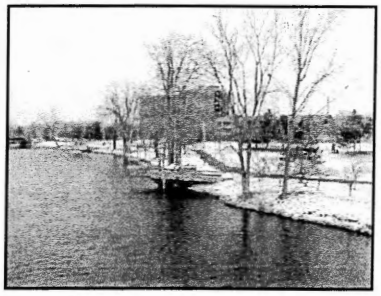
Urban Design

The appropriate design, arrangement and integration of public and private spaces within *Scofield Place* will be necessary in order to make this a desirable location for new housing, office and commercial ventures to locate. *Scofield Place* must be designed to promote pedestrian scale, safety, and aesthetically pleasing public places which will enhance and support the Commerce Center to the south as well as providing new housing opportunities to compliment the existing housing development along the river. A final challenge will be to create development which is attractive to the pedestrian as well as vehicular traffic moving in a series of one-way street patterns. This challenge will be addressed in the next section.



Provide new housing opportunities along the river.

Circulation

Scofield Place already faced with a wide diversity of land uses and variances in scale and design, is further complicated by its one-way street patterns. Saginaw/Oakland and Cedar/Larch are primary east/west and north/south arterial roads which carry significant vehicular volumes each day. Unlike other parts of the city where these pairs may be two blocks apart, the space between them in *Scofield Place* is limited. If significant, viable opportunities for new land uses are to develop, strategies must be identified which will minimize the impact of these streets.

Phase 3 of the overall Proposed Circulation Plan would utilize the existing right-of-way for Cedar and Larch Streets and convert each of them to two-way operation. Larch Street, being further from downtown and almost on the edge of the central area, would be the arterial designated to carry the through traffic. The cross section would have two moving lanes in each direction and would allow few, if any, turning movements. Cedar Street on the other hand would be designed to carry one moving lane in each direction with left hand turning lanes at intersections and parallel or angle parking on one or both sides of the street depending on the width of right of way in various segments. Two-way operation, especially with parking along the curb line, should slow traffic and allow businesses along the street to be more visible to the motorist. At the same time, two-way operation makes these businesses more accessible since motorists can approach from either direction and park in front of the business. The slower traffic and the change from two moving lanes to three will make crossing the street less daunting to the pedestrian and will not present as much of a barrier or obstacle to establishing a sense of community on both sides of the street. Bicycle lanes should also be incorporated into such a design to provide additional alternative transportation opportunities.

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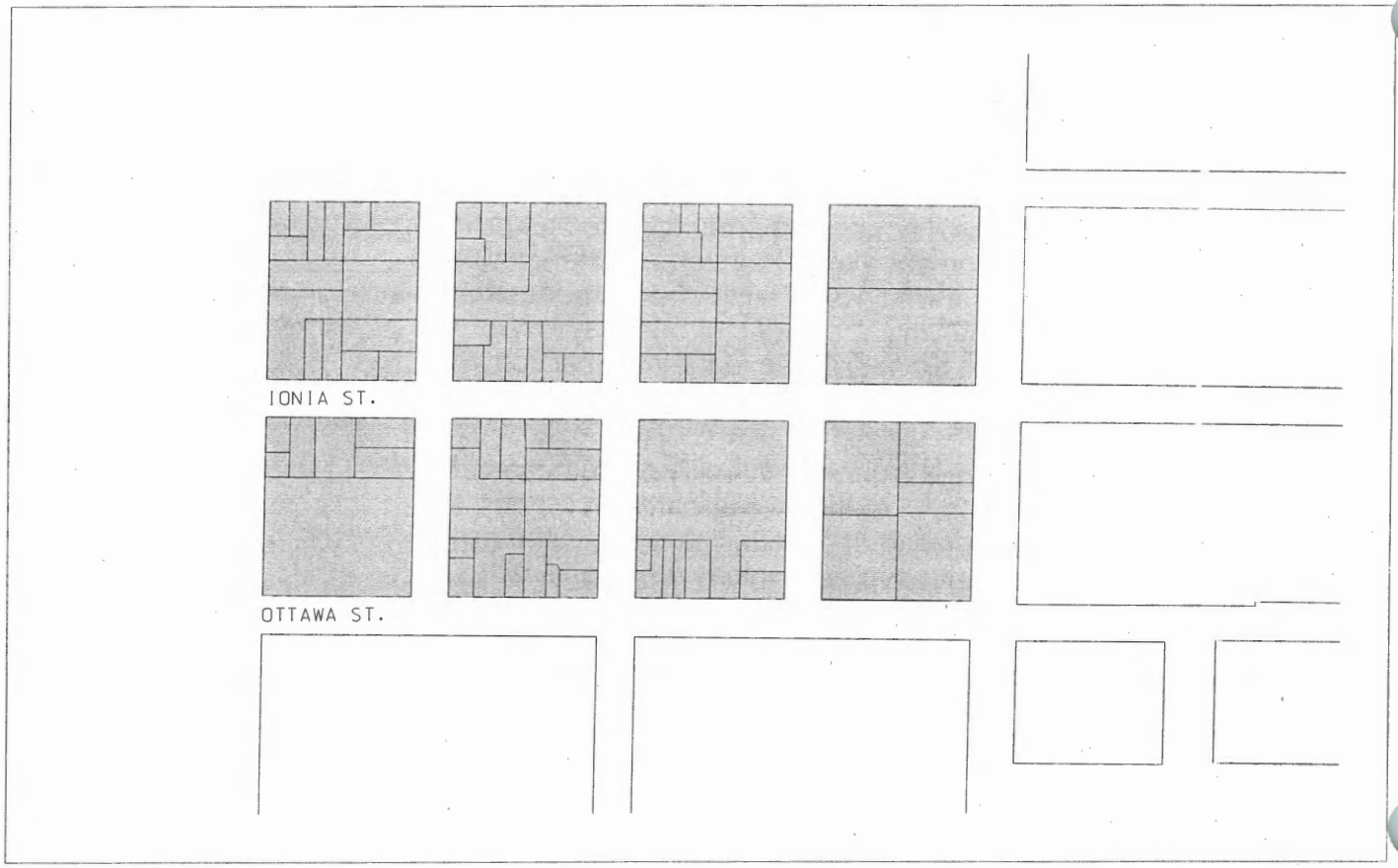
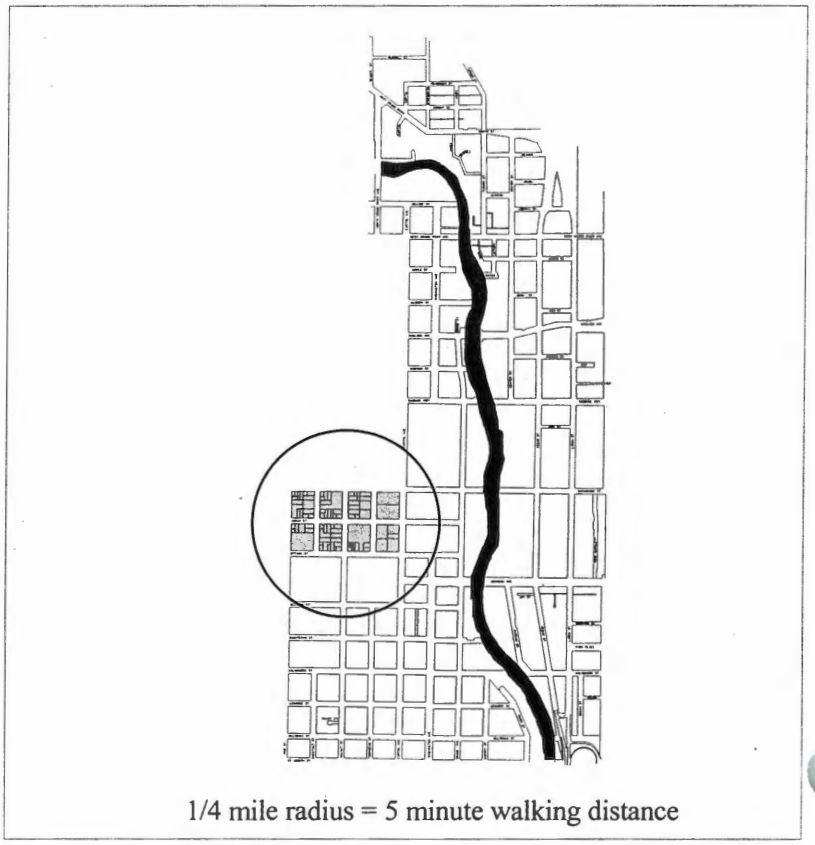
Ferris Park





1/4 mile radius = 5 minute walking distance

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Ferris Park

The *Ferris Park District*, located just northwest of the Capitol, has evolved into a vibrant center of business and professional activity. Like Reutter Park, it is comprised of a blend of business, professional, and residential uses. The district is bounded by Capitol Ave. on the East, Pine St. on the West, Shiawassee St. on the North, and Ottawa St. on the South. *Ferris Park*, a six acre urban green space, borders this district on the north.

In order to maintain the harmonious blend of residential and non-residential uses, particular attention must be paid to maintaining the residential character of business and professional offices in the area. Moreover, priority should be given to sustaining and even increasing the residential presence in the district.

To that end, restoring *Ferris Park* to a full two-block park with playground facilities is a step in the right direction. Continued development of the park to include picnic facilities, fountains, gazebos and other amenities will encourage activity in the area by professionals during the work day, as well as by local residents on evenings and weekends.

Like Reutter Park on the south end of downtown, *Ferris Park* is a ideal hub for vibrant activity in the district. Given the size of the park, it would be an ideal candidate for activities such as concerts, festivals, and art shows while including amenities that will protect and enhance the integrity of the residences that surround it.

Land Use

The residential uses vary greatly in this eight block district, from single family homes to the Ferris Park Towers building. Numerous significant churches are also contained within this district, which serve as excellent community facilities supporting the entire city. Professional offices for lawyers and lobbyists are within this district and concentrate toward the State Capitol building. Some buildings contain a mix of residential and commercial/office uses. Primarily, the residential uses of the mixed use buildings are on the upper floors while the first floor is office or commercial. Many of the structures in this district have significant historical value as well.

Ferris Park Towers

This mixture of land uses serves as a transition between the residential neighborhood to the north and west, and the more intense uses surrounding the Capitol. This transition area which extends into some of the adjacent blocks needs to be maintained and enhanced. The land uses are well balanced for an effective transition and any changes to the present mix should be carefully weighed. Finally, the River Island Amendment Plan established boundaries for office and mixed use residential/offices in this area.

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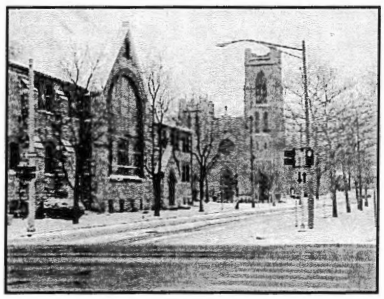
This resulted in the "D-2" Residential/Office District contained within the Zoning Code. These boundaries should be maintained to protect the integrity of this district.

Urban Design

The primarily historic nature of the district should be preserved to help maintain the significant land use relationship this district has with the surrounding areas. The continued improvement of *Ferris Park* to the north is also key to enhancing the district's viability and vitality. Removal of the remaining surface parking on the east half of the park will allow the park to be fully developed for its park purpose and support the historic quality of the area. Streetscape elements, such as lighting, trees and signage, should reinforce the historic residential character of the area. Parkways, the area between the curb and the sidewalk, should be maintained with lawn and street trees with their magnificent canopy. Bus shelters and other furnishings should be designed to complement the district's qualities.



The primarily historic nature of this district should be preserved.

Circulation

One-way streets in the district are recommended to be converted to two-way in phases. Shiawassee and Ionia Streets are to be included in the first phase of conversions while the north-south pair of Walnut and Pine Streets are to be converted in the second phase. This conversion will benefit the residential character of the district by slowing traffic while allowing for a more natural traffic pattern. Pedestrian and bicycle circulation will be enhanced with pedestrian scaled streetscape elements as described in the preceding paragraph.

Parking

In the *Ferris Park District* curbside parking should be maximized for the benefit of the occupants of the area. Due to the proximity of this district to other activity centers, curbside parking is utilized by those outside the district. Surface parking lots that support adjacent buildings should be well landscaped and have minimal exposure to the street. Surface parking lots that exclusively support buildings out of the *Ferris Park District* should not be permitted and the remaining parking lot in *Ferris Park* should be removed.

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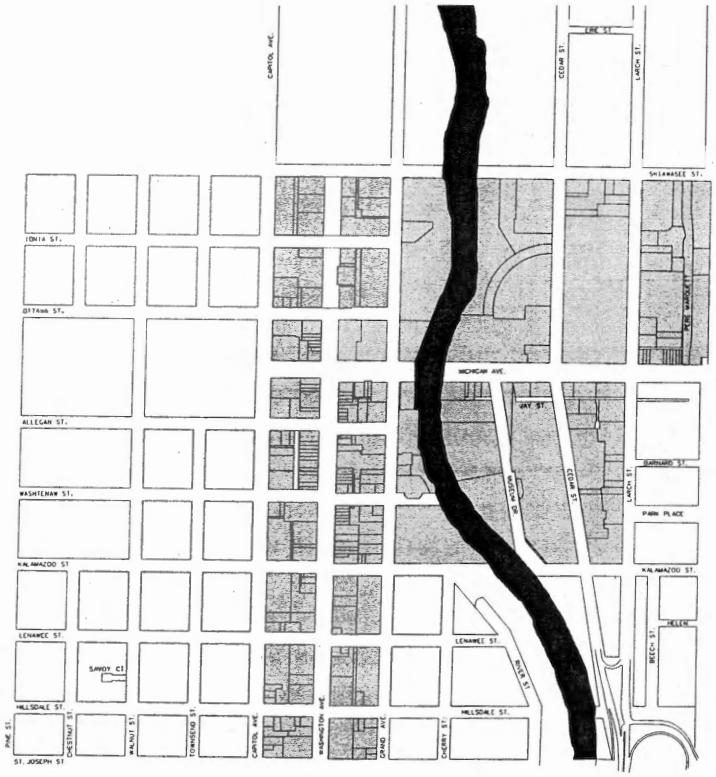
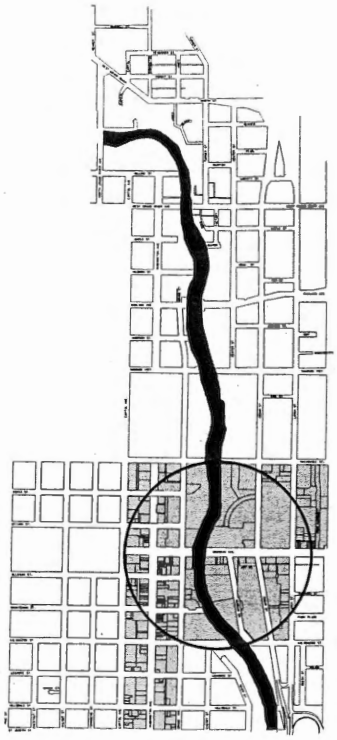
Commerce Center





1/4 mile radius = 5 minute walking distance

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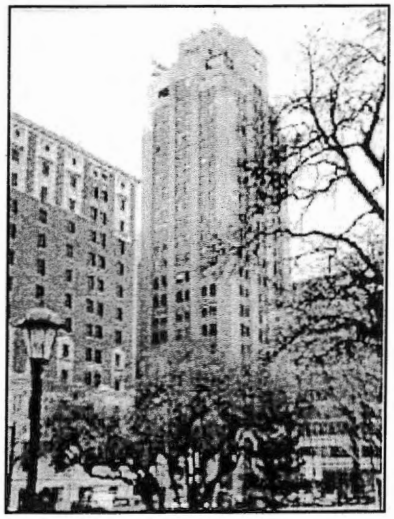
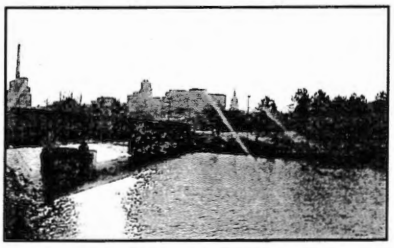
Commerce Center

The Central Business District functions as the center of economic activity within a city or region. It is the home of skyscraper offices, finance, governance, higher education and institutions. In many cities, apartments over specialty shops, upper-story penthouses, and dense apartment structures house business leaders and workers alike, and generate activity around the clock. Mixed uses, high densities, and convenient transit encourage economic activity and movement within the district.



Michigan National Tower

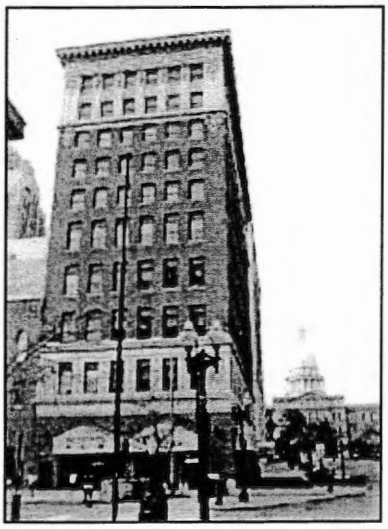
In Lansing the CBD has long been home to a number of the architectural landmarks that were designed and constructed to enhance their surroundings and build a positive image of the city as a center of government and commerce. These buildings are surrounded by smaller buildings of the period, which are also important to the downtown's dense, mixed-use development pattern that makes its buildings well-suited for restaurants and specialty shops, offices, and urban residents.



Lansing skyline from the River Trail

Today, Lansing's *Commerce Center* is the home of state and local offices and institutions. It contains Cooley Law School and Lansing Community College as well as numerous retailers, restaurants, and financial institutions. It has good transit connections, particularly with Greater Lansing's east side, and good access to the Capital Area Transportation Authority's Transportation Center.

The *Commerce Center* is also the home of Lansing's burgeoning entertainment complex, which extends eastward along Michigan Avenue from the State Capitol. This complex was established to cluster large scale entertainment uses with related restaurants, night clubs, and hotels in an urban, pedestrian-oriented setting. It will function as a mixed area of convention centers, theaters, sports facilities, museums and other facilities. It contains the Lansing Center, Oldsmobile Park, the Radisson Hotel, Museum Drive, the City Market, and a growing number of restaurants and night clubs.



Prudden Building and State Capitol

Land Use

The development of the *Commerce Center* should utilize existing structures and encourage workers and visitors to inhabit the area. Ground floor uses should be retail with window displays and café seating. Upper floors should accommodate residential and/or office uses.

New buildings should be constructed primarily in large existing parking lots, such as those located along South Grand and the 500 block of South Washington. Smaller infill sites are located in the 200 and 300 blocks of S. Washington.

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Perhaps the most unique site for restoration and redevelopment is the Board of Water and Light's Ottawa Street Power Station. This building provides an excellent setting for a mixed use project on a larger scale.

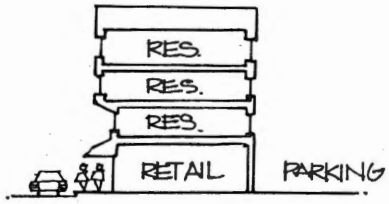
Retail

The traditional downtown retail center is essential for the success of any major city. Washington Square is the primary retail district in the Central Lansing study area. Four blocks of retail and restaurants extend along Washington Square south of Michigan. A market study recommends specialty food and retail shops and various restaurants.

Additional ideas have also emerged, such as sports shops along the riverfront with bike, boat and skate rentals, in conjunction with additional entertainment destinations oriented toward the river.

The City Market should take more advantage of its prime location and riverfront access. It should expand its services and facilities to include specialty food items and a full service grocery store.

Retail and restaurant uses generate more foot traffic and activity than office uses, and should be required on the first floor of buildings on North Washington Square between Michigan Avenue and Shiawassee Street in the event that this section is opened up to vehicular traffic.



Residences

Mixed density residential above or near the shopping, office and entertainment areas are recommended. An influx of residents would not only provide activity beyond traditional business hours, but would bolster the market for retail and entertainment in downtown and increase the perception of security.

Office

The *Commerce Center* is an attractive office location because of its proximity to the Capitol. Office uses are clustered on the west side of the *Commerce Center*, particularly along Capitol Avenue and North Washington Square. Financial institutions, State offices, Cooley Law School, and attorney/accounting firms predominate.

Office uses, which do not require heavy foot traffic, would be better located in the upper stories of *Commerce Center* buildings, with retail on the first floor where feasible.

House Office Building

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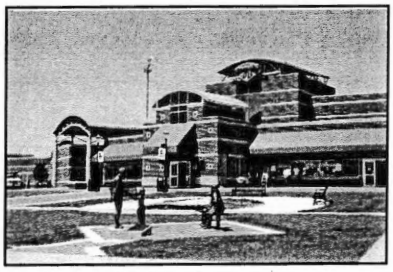
Entertainment



Oldsmobile Park

The *Commerce Center* should be the location for any type of large scale destination consistent with Oldsmobile Park, the Lansing Center and the City Market. A Performing Arts Center, restaurants, museums, and hotels would be appropriate in this district.

As the Entertainment Complex continues to develop, it should possess the following qualities:

- It must be unique;
- There must be adjacent attractions;
- The area needs convenient pedestrian circulation and links to adjacent anchors;
- The entertainment must provide enjoyment for a sufficient duration;
- It must have family and adult orientation;
- The food quality must be high;
- The merchandise must be affordable;
- A critical mass is needed to support visits of longer duration;
- A high repeat visitation by residents and diverse supporting markets are essential;
- Personal security and the perception of safety must be provided.

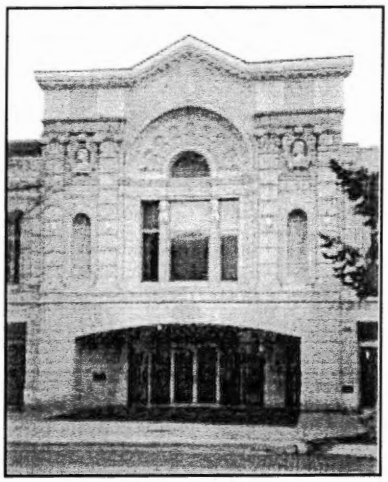
Lansing Center

A subsidy of 30 to 50 percent for large scale urban entertainment centers is often required, and a local developer usually plays an active role in the district's development.

Urban Design

Commercial/Retail Core

Michigan Avenue is the ceremonial gateway leading to the Capitol building and the surrounding historical structures, and Washington Avenue is the heart of retail activity.



The Strand Theater

- The historic buildings and character in this district should be protected as vital to the character of Lansing. Future development and facade improvements should mirror the unique and historic architecture in the downtown.
- The streetscape on these streets should represent the highest quality public environment the City has to offer, they should be maintained to the highest standard in the entire City to reflect the importance and level of pride in downtown.
- Quality design improvements have been made that should be maintained meticulously and upgraded over time.

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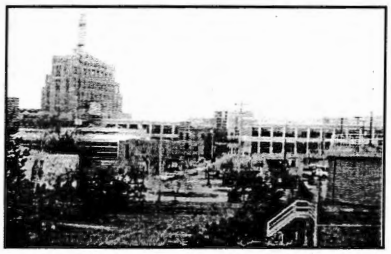
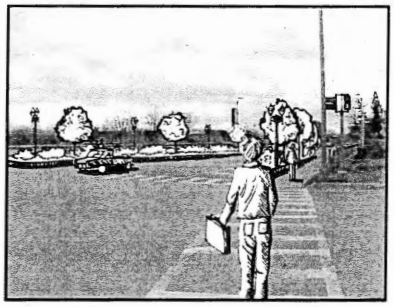
Continued importance must be given to the pedestrian network critical to the success of this district. On-street parking must be encouraged and large stately street trees should be provided near the curb.



Museum Row

- The central view to the Capitol building should continue to be preserved.
- Street level windows and storefronts should be provided to make the walk on Michigan Avenue lively and comfortable.
- Design elements including street trees, brick pavers, and decorative lighting should be extended southward across the I-496 bridge toward the Riverpoint Neighborhood.
- The street furniture zone should be wide enough to accommodate outdoor dining, sidewalk festivals, and an improved streetscape.
- A well-marked and highly visible off-street pedestrian promenade should be established which links entertainment attractions, the riverfront, and the retail areas. The pedestrian bridges proposed in this Plan are an important component of this promenade.
- The streetscape should be designed for pedestrian safety and comfort, as well as for the visibility of businesses.
- Business signs should be pedestrian oriented, with less emphasis on orienting signage to the car.



Streetscape elements should be extended across the I-496 bridge toward the Riverpoint Neighborhood.

The way-finding system is especially important in the *Commerce Center*. It is essential that visitors and shoppers are able to locate parking easily and find the way from one attraction to the next. A well-marked and highly off-street pedestrian promenade should be established which links retail and entertainment attractions and the riverfront. The pedestrian bridges proposed in this Plan are an important component of this promenade.

Cedar Street

The recommended conversion of Cedar Street from a one-way to a two-way street will drastically alter the character of the area to one which will provide greater support to residential development. The future Cedar Street will be designed to link the neighborhoods together and enable cross-use between Old Town and the *Commerce Center*. On-street parking, bicycle lanes, slower speed limits, and traffic lights will discourage through traffic and maintain a safety level conducive to residential neighborhoods. The typical cross-section should consist of wide sidewalks with a grass strip to the curb, minimal or no overhead utilities, decorative lighting and trees on both sides of the roadway. The lane widths should be reduced. Cross walks and pedestrian signals should be introduced and accentuated with complementary design features.

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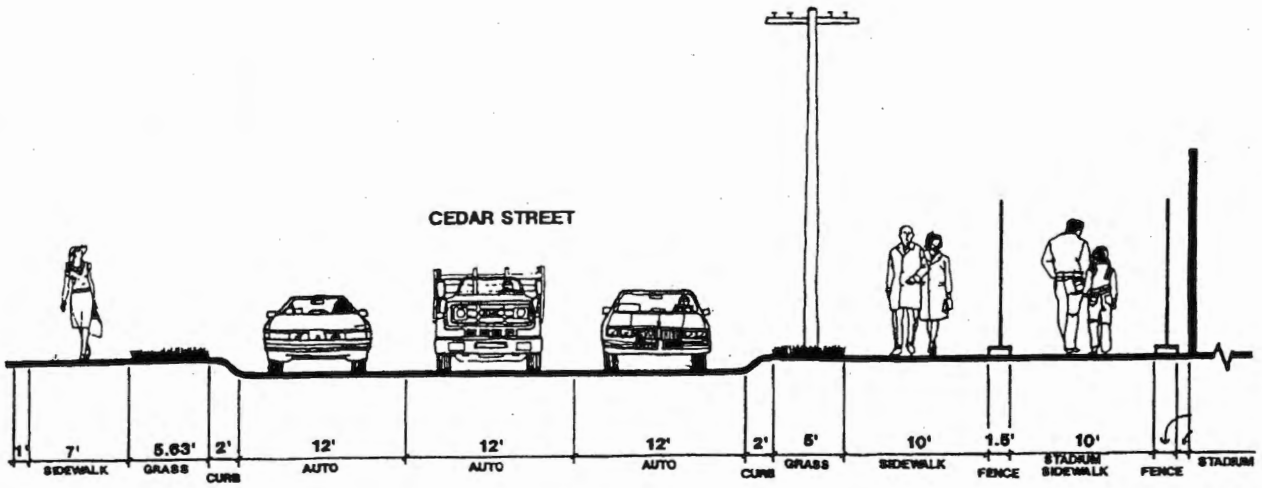
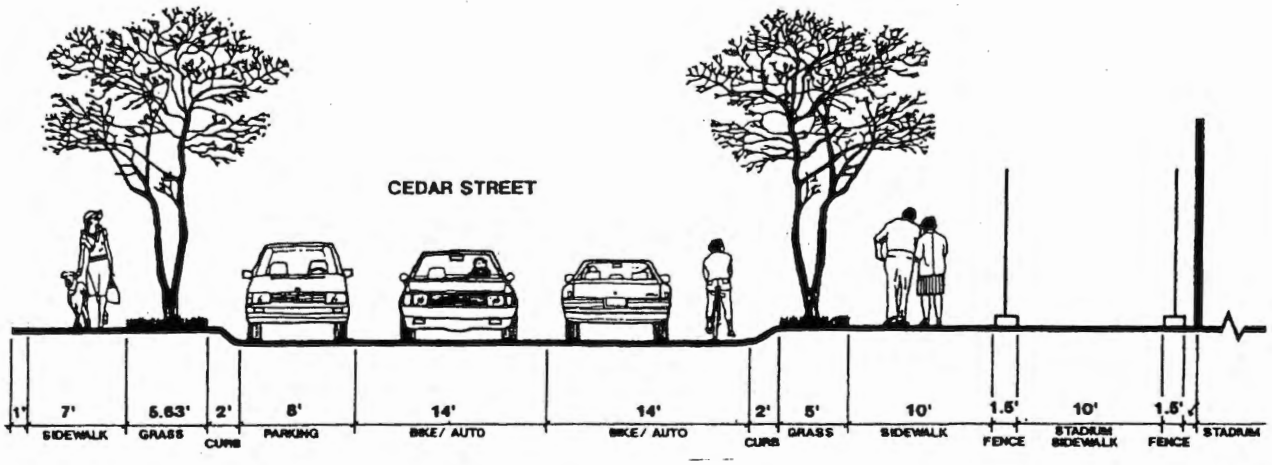


EXISTING SECTION
(View North between Michigan Avenue and Shiawassee Street)



TWO WAY TRAFFIC

PROPOSED SECTION
(View North between Michigan Avenue and Shiawassee)

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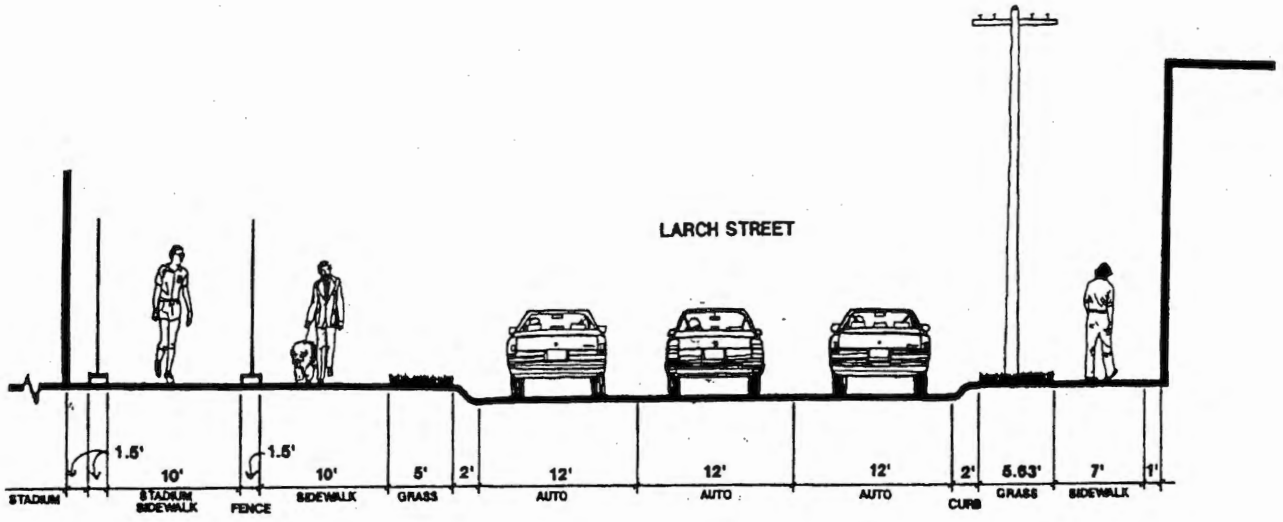
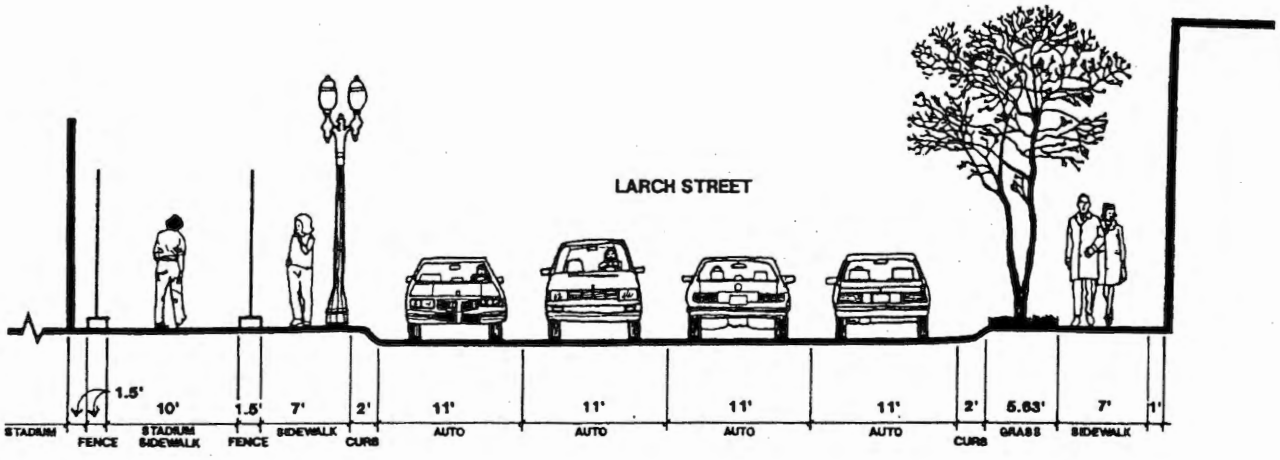


EXISTING SECTION
(View North between Michigan Avenue and Shiawassee Street)



TWO WAY TRAFFIC

PROPOSED SECTION
(View North between Michigan Avenue and Shiawassee)

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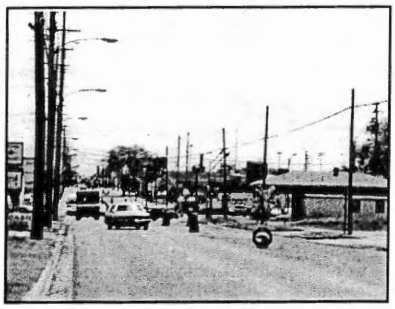
Larch Street



Enhance Larch Street as a primary gateway

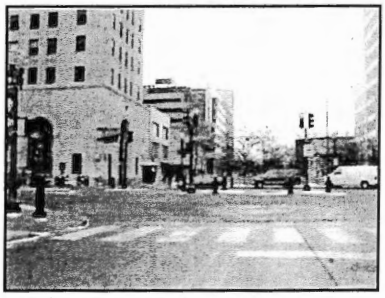
Larch Street is a primary gateway to Lansing and should be designed to give a positive impression of Central Lansing. The proposed character of Larch Street is of a local arterial that links Old Town and the Entertainment District and serves as an access point to the freeway system. The street should accommodate through traffic and truck traffic away from residential areas and the Old Town district. Larch Street should be an attractive local street that encourages people to enter and enjoy downtown Lansing.

Travelers along Larch Street should catch glimpses of the skyline and *Commerce Center* attractions. Streetscape treatments should be located between the curb and the sidewalk to give the impression of an urban parkway, contribute some sense of enclosure to the open roadway, and protect pedestrians. Overhead utilities should be relocated underground.

Washington Square (Michigan Avenue to Shiawassee Street)

This section of Washington Square is a pedestrian mall flanked by office buildings, with several distinct spaces with seating and landscaping. It provides a valuable respite and gathering place for the lunchtime crowd.

Pedestrian amenities should be provided, and there should be a more direct visual and physical tie to both the Washington Avenue retail south of Michigan Avenue and the Lansing Community College (LCC) campus north of Shiawassee Street.



A landmark on the round-about should mark the entrance to North Washington Square.

The proposed concept for this area includes lawn areas with borders defined by wide sidewalks, street lights and deciduous trees. A landmark, such as a sculpture on the round-about at Michigan Avenue should mark the entrance to North Washington Square retail area. Similar attention should be given to Washington at Shiawassee, where the *Commerce Center* and Lansing Community College meet. Close collaboration with LCC is encouraged in the design for the Washington corridor at or near the college campus.

A detailed Urban Design Study should be conducted in the future regarding the *Commerce Center*. The elements to be considered include historical resources, vistas of the Lansing skyline and riverfront, pedestrian comfort, sign visibility, way-finding, and linkages to neighboring districts. Design standards can be established and administered through overlay zoning districts.

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Circulation

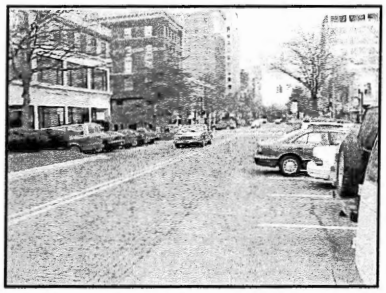
Many of the circulation proposals discussed earlier in the Plan will benefit the *Commerce Center*. The two-way street recommendation should reduce confusion and driving distances, improve access to businesses and residences, and improve the convenience of transit. The proposed bicycle lanes will provide a network of feeder routes for the River Trail. Design improvements should encourage pedestrian movement and activity within and among the districts. An important aspect of pedestrian circulation is a pedestrian promenade, including pedestrian/bicycle bridges across the Grand River.

The proposed trolley should be implemented as a means of improving connections between Riverpoint, the *Commerce Center*, Lansing Community College, Durant Park Village, Willow-Pine and Old Town.

Parking

Parking within the *Commerce Center* should be on-street as much as possible. Off-street parking should be above, below, or behind buildings, and reliance on surface parking should diminish.

The Circulation section discusses parking reduction strategies which should be considered for implementation in this district.



Parking should be on-street where possible.

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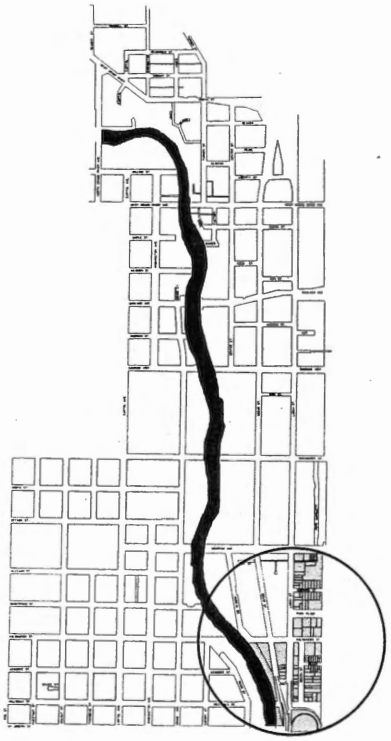
Park Place



1/4 mile radius = 5 minute walking distance

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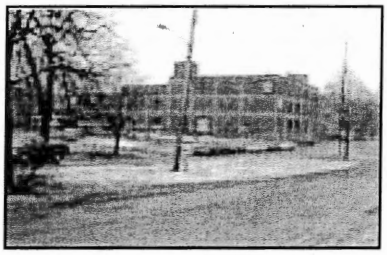
Park Place

The name "Park Place" bestows a sense of pride and prestige on the short, wide boulevard that extends east off Larch Street between Michigan and Kalamazoo.

This street's namesake, the *Park Place District*, lies between the Commerce Center to the west, and the Green Oaks and Hosmer Street neighborhoods to the east. It is thus an important linkage between these neighborhoods and the balance of the Central Lansing planning area.

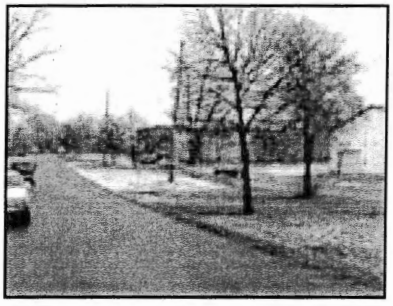


The district is located south of Michigan Avenue, between Larch Street and the CSX railroad to the east. South of Kalamazoo, it juts westward to the Grand River, and extends south to Interstate 496.

Park Place is one area where downtown workers can conveniently get their cars repaired while they are at work. It is also important as an approach to Oldsmobile Park and other destinations along the Commerce Center's east side. Its businesses take advantage of this proximity by providing convenient off-street parking to evening visitors.

Land Use

The *Park Place District* lies within a triangle marked by General Motors, Lansing Community College, and Sparrow Hospital, and is a good location for high-technology uses or an industrial training center. Park Place boulevard is an industrial park in microcosm, and has potential as a high tech enclave with convenient access to the Commerce Center amenities and business addresses. The area along Larch Street should also offer sites for small-scale high technology/light industrial uses.



Park Place has two small residential enclaves made up largely of single family homes. Barnard Street extends eastward from Larch to the CSX railroad right-of-way. Residences that line the street sit on a knoll, separated only by elevation from the bustle of the Commerce Center across Larch Street. The second and larger of the two enclaves is located just south of Kalamazoo Street along Beech and Helen Streets, buffered somewhat from the traffic on Larch. Both these neighborhoods are close to the Central Lansing amenities, and would be good targets for housing rehabilitation and home ownership programs.

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Circulation

Circulation, land use and urban design in the south end of *Park Place* will be a key location for the proposed Phase III circulation improvements. Cedar Street diverges into Cedar and Larch at the I-496 interchange, splitting into two one-way streets through the planning area. Two-way circulation on Cedar and Larch will reduce traffic speeds and improve mobility within the district. The proposed conversion to two-way traffic movement will require careful planning, and may entail the redesign of the freeway interchange.

Bicycle lanes should be added where feasible within existing roadways, particularly along Kalamazoo Street, which features bicycle lanes east of the district, and provides a key connection between street-level bicycle routes and the River Trail.

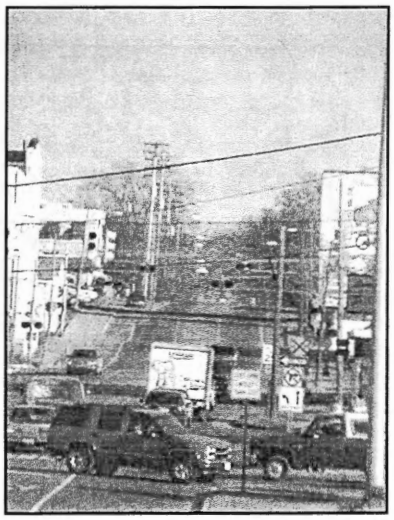
Sidewalks should be installed where missing throughout the district and widened where feasible along Larch Street south of Michigan Avenue to facilitate and encourage pedestrian movement.

Cul-de-sacs or "T" turnarounds are recommended for the termini of Park Place and Barnard Street.

On-street parking in *Park Place's* residential areas should be limited to residents and their guests. Parking for baseball games and other special events should be limited to business parking lots only.

Urban Design

Park Place is Central Lansing's gateway from the south and east. Views from these vantage points provide the initial impression of Central Lansing, and efforts to enhance these vistas will yield lasting results. From the east, Michigan Avenue, Kalamazoo Street and I-496 are main routes into the City. Larch and Cedar Streets are the main north-south vehicular routes, and the River Trail is a principal route for non-motorized traffic. Each route offers its own views of the City, both from a distance and up-close.



The pedestrian orientation of East Kalamazoo Street should be restored.

In *Park Place*, the pedestrian orientation of the planning area begins to dissipate. Along East Kalamazoo Street, the sidewalks narrow as the distance from the Commerce Center increases. Automobile-oriented commercial uses line East Michigan Avenue's south side, facing the more pedestrian uses directly across the street. The sense of enclosure is broken along both corridors by parking lots and deeper front yard setbacks.

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Specific steps should be taken to restore the pedestrian orientation necessary to link this district with adjacent neighborhoods to the east. The aesthetic improvements that were successful on the Shiawassee Street Bridge should be replicated on Kalamazoo Street. Streetscape improvements, including lighting, landscaping, street trees, and street furniture should be installed along East Kalamazoo to strengthen and enhance this linkage. To reestablish a sense of enclosure, any redevelopment along Kalamazoo should be constructed close to the street with minimal front yard setbacks and parking to the side or rear.

Larch Street is a major route north through the city. It is a gateway to the Commerce Center and other Central Lansing districts. As such, it has a large influence over the way in which the safety and quality of life in Central Lansing are perceived. Every effort should be made to make the area attractive and inviting. Therefore, changes to the current city ordinances should be made so that attractive screening and buffering are mandated in commercial and industrial areas.

Park Place boulevard has potential as a prestigious business address. In the short term, the screening and beautification of outdoor storage areas is recommended. The small warehouses along Park Place could be accented with landscaping and awnings. Longer range improvements could include supplanting the outdoor storage with infill development, and enhancing the boulevard with streetscape improvements and a modified cul-de-sac treatment.

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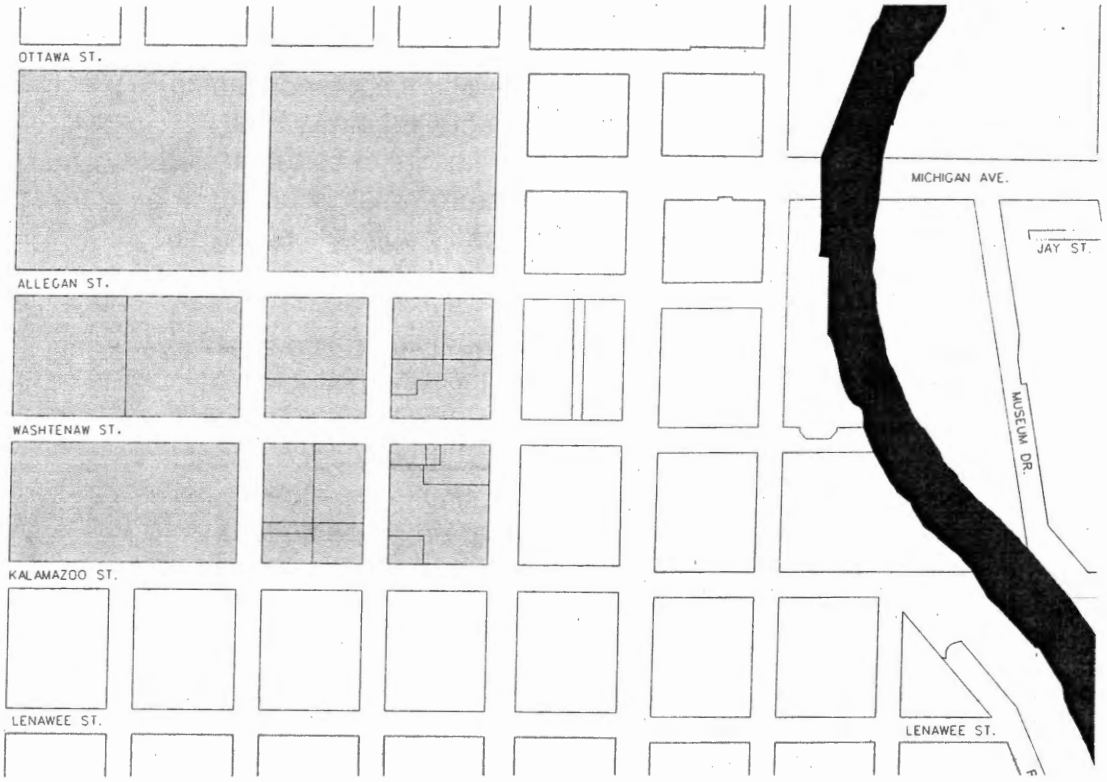
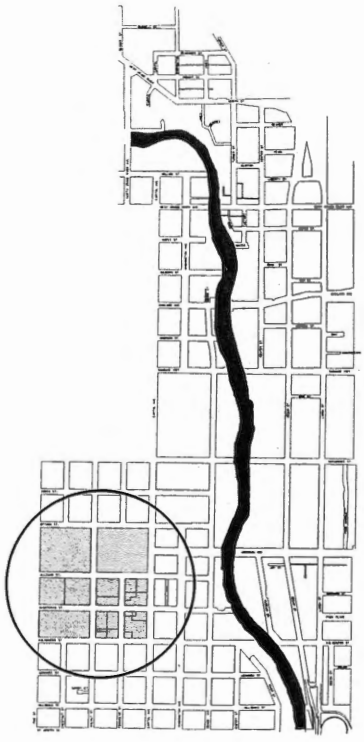
Government





1/4 mile radius = 5 minute walking distance

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State Government Complex

The *State Government Complex* is bounded by Ottawa Street on the north, Capitol Avenue on the east; Kalamazoo Street on the south. It extends west to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard, which is beyond the Central Lansing planning area boundaries. Forty-eight acres lie within the planning area, and are primarily occupied by state governmental offices.

A majority of the buildings within this area are owned by the state and are under the jurisdiction of the Property Management Section of the Department of Management and Budget. The other buildings within this area occupied by state workers are privately owned and leased to the State of Michigan. These include the YWCA building at 216 Townsend and the building presently under construction on the site of the old Civic Center Building. Also located with the area are a private parking ramp, a federal office building, a funeral home, and several small private offices.

Land Use

Although it is anticipated that this area will remain in use and/or ownership of the State of Michigan, the daytime population of this complex is approximately 15,000 people. Studies presently being conducted by the State and one completed by Green & Associates for this Plan would seem to indicate that a vast majority of these people leave the downtown area at 5:00 p.m., and often do not spend their time or their disposable income in the Commerce Center.

While the land use of this area is not expected to change, the presence of such a large captive group during each working day, and the sheer physical size of the buildings, have a profound impact on the surrounding land uses and upon the circulation system which serves this population. Such information is valuable in developing strategies and proposals to entice the office workers to: frequent the retail shops, utilize alternative transportation systems, and seek downtown residential opportunities.

The State Capitol Building contains a distinctive element of Greek Revival and Neo-gothic styles of architecture.

Urban Design

The governmental complex has always celebrated its role as Capitol of the State of Michigan. As with other state governmental complexes around the country, there is a distinctive element of Greek Revival and Neo-gothic styles of architecture which are patterned after Washington DC. The height and mass of these buildings are intended to present grand stature. Consequently, the surrounding uses (often residential in nature) are dwarfed by comparison. It will be necessary for new buildings to be sensitive to the scale of surrounding land uses and be designed in such a

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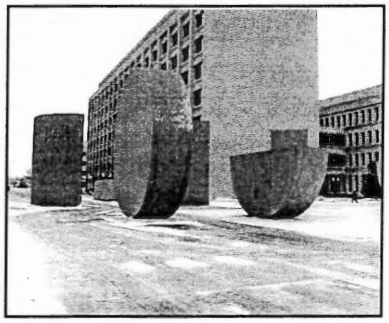
way as to be compatible with, not overpower surrounding existing uses. In this regard, it is recommended that new design guidelines be developed which are sensitive to pedestrian scale, the need for adequate green space and appropriate signage which will be harmonious with the existing development.



Artwork enhances the aesthetics of functional architecture.

It is also recommended that new buildings be aesthetically pleasing as well as functional. Such designs would indeed reflect the importance of this complex as the Capitol of the State of Michigan.

Circulation

The Capitol Complex receives more than five (5) million visitors a year. Some are tours of Scouts and school groups, some are constituents, and others are visitors here for conventions or a ball game. Many have never been here before. The most frequent complaint among such groups is the confusing and frustrating one-way street system.

It is recommended that as a first phase, Washtenaw, Ionia and Shiawassee Streets be returned to two-way operation by the fall of 1999. Secondly, that a comprehensive study be undertaken to evaluate the feasibility of returning all of the streets in the downtown area west of the Grand River, south of Oakland, north of St. Joseph St. and east of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard to two-way operation. The third phase would involve the return of other streets east of the Grand River to two-way operation. The implementation of this recommendation would facilitate the movement of vehicles in and around the complex for out of town visitors and other local, infrequent visitors. It is also clear that some increased delays would occur for the worker leaving at 5:00 p.m. While these delays are generally considered acceptable under criteria established by the Institute of Traffic Engineers (ITE), the delays may be sufficient to provide the additional incentive for office workers to choose alternative transportation (i.e. bus or trolley) or choose a downtown residential location thereby reducing urban sprawl.

The Capitol Complex must also provide an inviting atmosphere to pedestrians and promote wayfinding techniques which will allow visitors, constituents, and workers to navigate easily within the complex. The Capitol Complex should be included in a study to develop a wayfinding system for the downtown area as well as development of an internal system designed specifically for the complex. The study should include strategies to move pedestrians quickly and efficiently from the complex to the Commerce Center. This may be achieved through the use of a connecting (east- west) trolley route which interfaces with the major north-south trolley

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route along Washington Avenue.

Parking

The consolidation, expansion and relocation of the state complex workforce within the complex will create a series of parking issues which must be identified and addressed. At the writing of this document, the State Department of Management and Budget is conducting a study regarding the new office space allocations, present parking and anticipated new parking demands as people shift across the complex. It is clear, regardless of the final outcome of the study, that convenient, accessible parking, controlled by the end user, must be made available. That does not however, necessarily mean "at the door" spaces. It may mean spaces in a remote location which are easily accessible at all times by the employee (by shuttle) or it may mean using an alternative transit option such as bus, bicycle or walking. In the short term, use of a shuttle may be the most advantageous system. However, in the long term, new parking ramps will need to be provided either as stand alone structures or incorporated in new buildings as they are built. The City and the State must continue to work cooperatively through the Mayor's City/State Parking Task Force to evaluate and develop strategies to address these issues.

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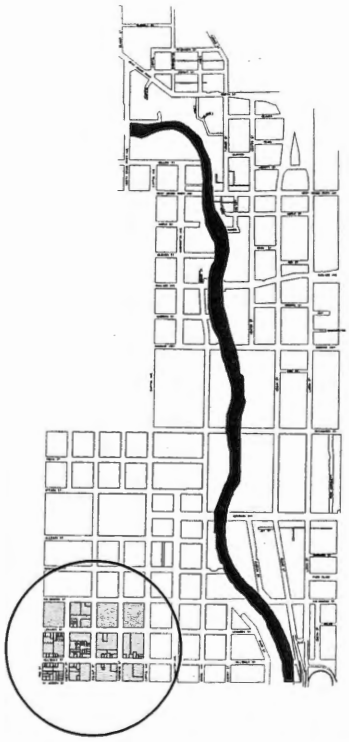
Reutter Park



1/4 mile radius = 5 minute walking distance

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Reutter Park

The *Reutter Park District* has become a hub for businesses and other activities supporting the state Capitol. The district comprises an eclectic blend of business, residences, governmental agencies, as well as labor and trade associations. It is bounded by Pine Street on the west, Capitol Avenue on the east, Kalamazoo Street on the North, and St. Joseph Avenue to the south.

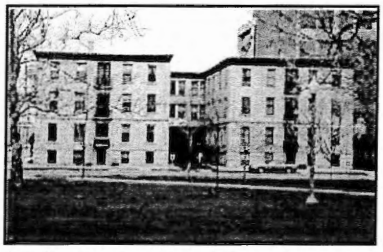
Land Use

Much of the area is characterized by residences harmoniously blended with non-residential structures. Many buildings housed by professional offices and trade associations have been converted from residential uses, and have thus maintained their residential character. Efforts should be made to increase the number of residents in this area while maintaining a balance between residential and professional uses. Future development in the area should focus on preserving and complementing *Reutter Park*'s urban character and pedestrian orientation.

Urban Design

As the area continues to develop, it must have a unifying theme or feature to establish its identity in the downtown area. *Ruetter Park* is just such a feature. The park is one square block, bound by Kalamazoo and Lenawee Streets on the north and south, and Capitol Avenue and Townsend Street on the east and west, respectively.

Reutter Park features a 1929 electric fountain as its centerpiece, surrounded by a circular walkway and concrete paths extending to the park's corners. Large maples and other trees frame vistas of the surrounding buildings.



Midtown Apartments

The buildings fronting on *Reutter Park*, with their shallow front setbacks and attractive design, create a sense of enclosure which results in an attractive pedestrian environment and urban setting. They include:

- The Midtown Apartments, a Classical Revival style four-story residential structure
- The Grady S. Porter County Office Building, an Art Moderne building constructed in 1950 and soon to be expanded
- The YMCA, a dignified 1947 Art Moderne building;
- The Porter Apartments a six-story Classical Revival structure built in 1917
- The Clara D. Rosa Library, which has a unique screen-wall construction with lacy textile blocks featuring the seals of major publishing companies

Porter Apartments

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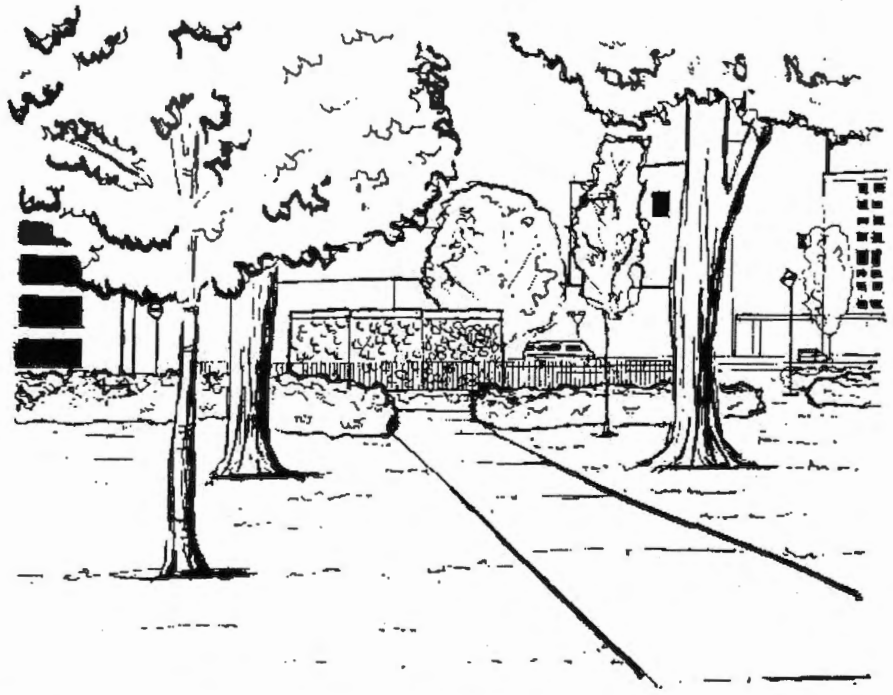
Reutter Park is a large, well maintained, and centrally-located park, with much potential for greater use. As the south end of downtown continues to develop and more people work and live in the area, *Reutter Park* would be a good south side location for the kinds of activities which are held on the north Washington mall area during the summer months.

Circulation and Parking

Surface parking areas should be reduced in size and number and enhanced in appearance. Parking should be over, under, or behind buildings. Surface lots should be small in size with landscaping required. Clearance of existing buildings to create additional parking space should be avoided.



"Reutter Park with its surrounding buildings is Lansing's finest urban space."
— Robert O. Christensen, State Historic Preservation Office

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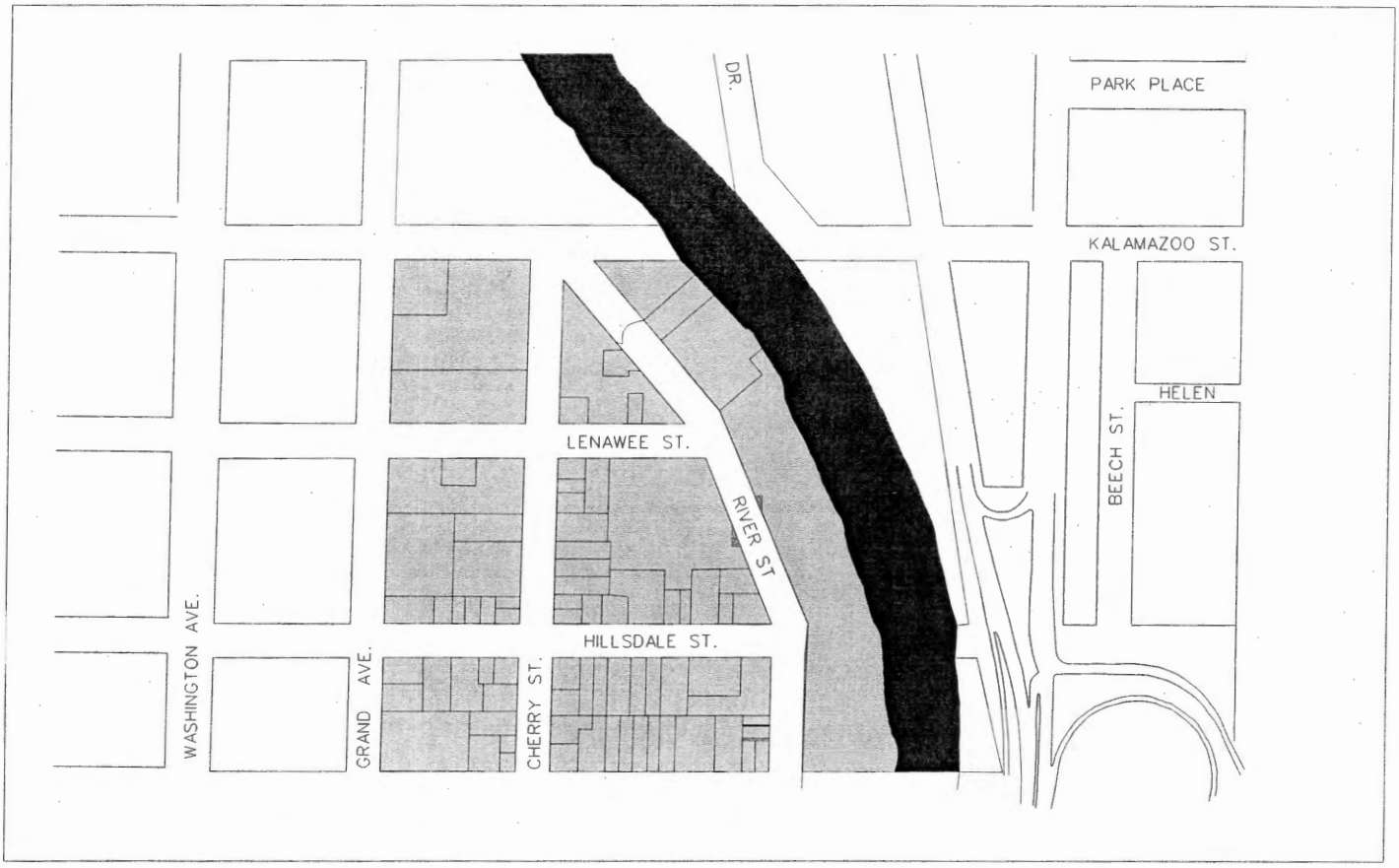
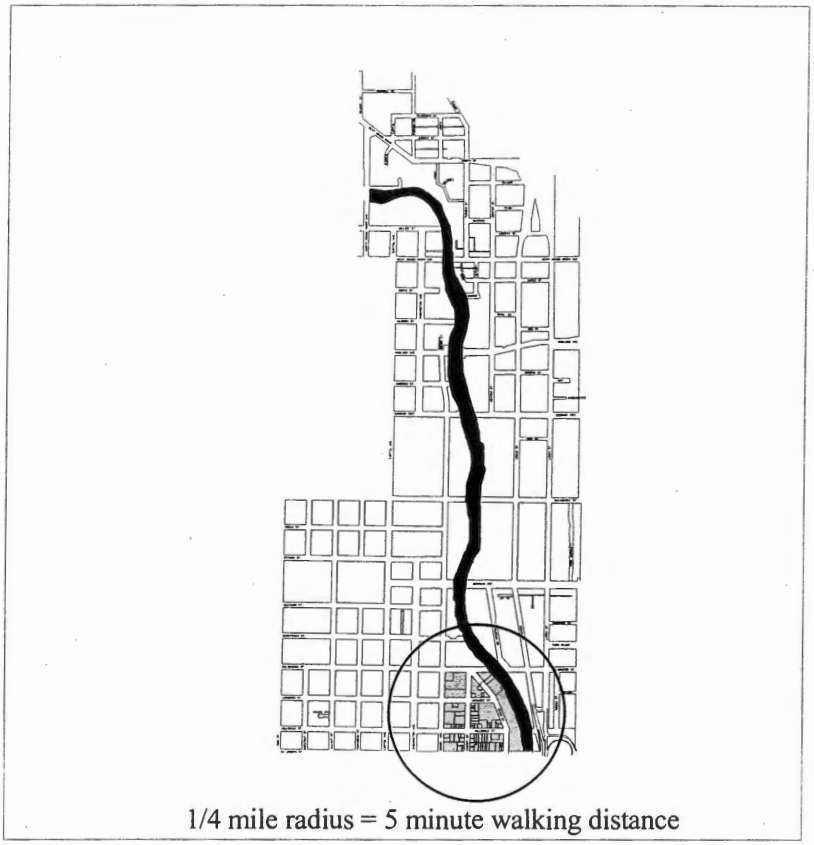
Cherry Hill





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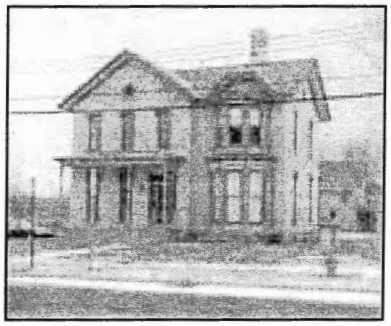
Cherry Hill

The *Cherry Hill* Neighborhood is a diverse nine block area marked by definite boundaries which help to protect this small enclave located just southeast of the Commerce Center District. The major boundaries include Kalamazoo Street on the north, the Grand River on the east I-496 to the south and Grand Avenue on the west. Davenport Business College, Cooley Law School, State Lottery Building, and the Center for the Arts are all located in this area.

Land Use

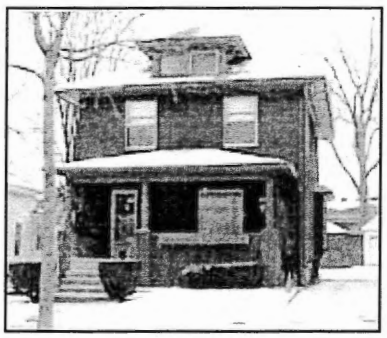
The *Cherry Hill* Neighborhood comprises a variety of land uses. Office and commercial occupy a substantial area followed by residential land use. Office uses are located primarily along Grand Avenue and Kalamazoo Street, with other scattered sites. Davenport College is located on Kalamazoo, and Cooley Law School has its administrative building on Grand in the *Cherry Hill* Neighborhood.



Cherry Hill's prime location at the I-496 Grand Avenue exit increases the market pressure for new development, and poses a threat to the residential and historic character of the district. A second threat comes from business expansion, either for larger facilities or parking. For example, several homes were demolished near Davenport College for parking along Lenawee, east of Cherry. Other alternatives to building demolitions for these purposes should be explored.

Urban Design

Mature trees clustered on rolling terrain sloping gently toward the Grand River describes the general character of this historic area. Over thirty structures are more than 100 years old and most were built before 1930. More recent structures are those larger apartment buildings in the 600 block of River Street and the 300 blocks of St. Joseph.



A substantial portion of the area is in a locally designated historic district, amounting to 25 structures. This historic district has a residential character which should be preserved. Infill development should be compatible in design, scale, and form to protect and enhance the character of the district.

Grand Avenue functions as a "gateway" into the downtown area and should be enhanced with landscaping and attractive signage. Historic lights would also help to emphasize the character of the area.

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Circulation

Restrictive circulation and access patterns resulting from Grand River and I-496 and one-way streets help to reduce traffic through the neighborhood. St. Joseph was cut off at Grand Avenue with a cul-de-sac, helping to eliminate excessive traffic in that area. Grand Avenue, a one-way street which borders *Cherry Hill* on the west, is proposed to be changed to two-way circulation. Careful attention should be given to protecting this district from excess traffic.

Parking

The *Cherry Hill* Neighborhood's proximity to Davenport College and downtown offices and businesses increases the demand for parking within the district. A large, privately-owned, unimproved gravel parking lot is located on Lenawee, just west of River Street. Hard surfacing and landscaping would enhance the functioning and appearance of this lot to the benefit of the entire district. A parking lot on River Street was converted to a park several years ago, improving the residential character of the area and creating an attractive amenity for this neighborhood.

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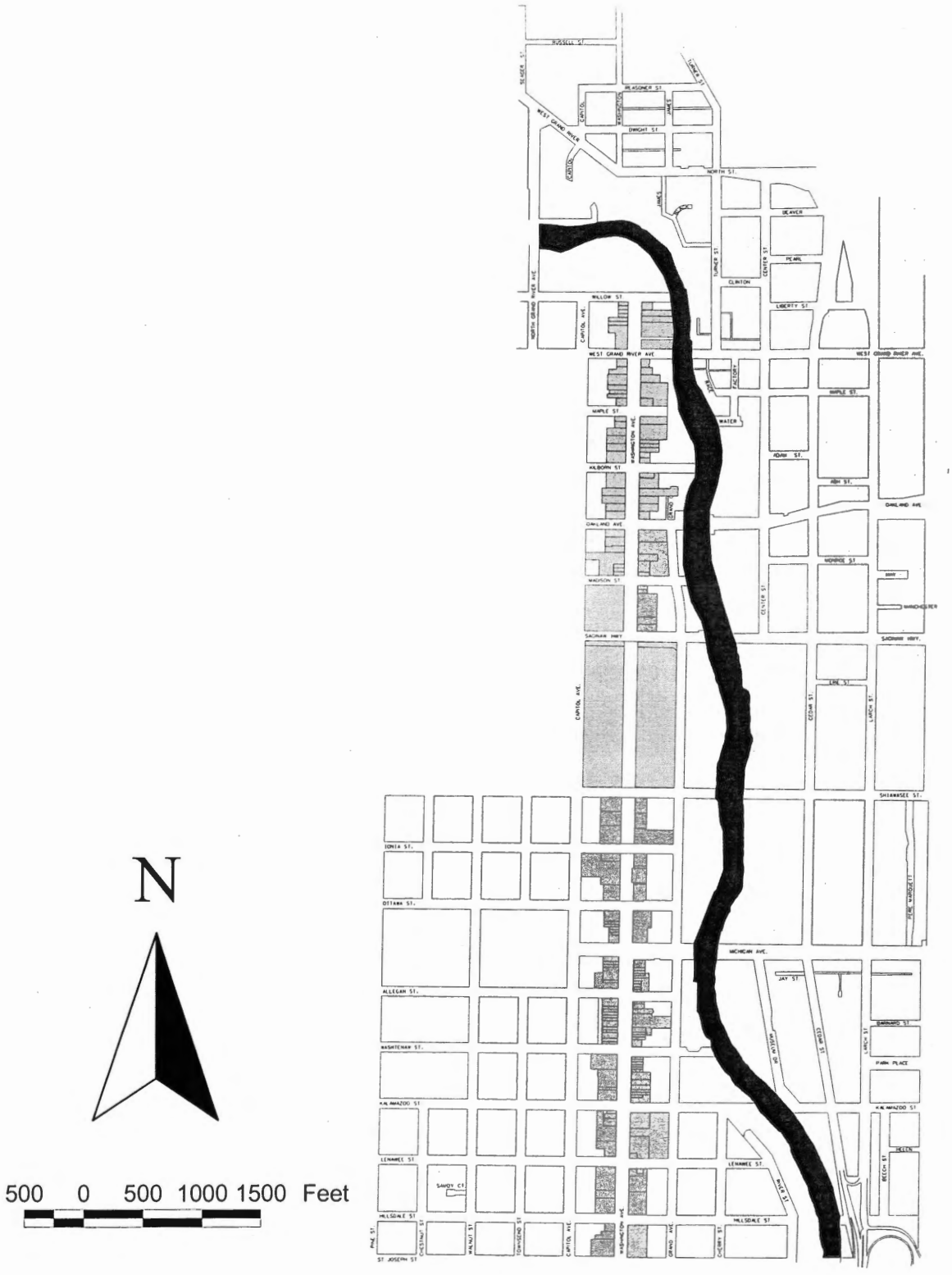
Washington Avenue Corridor



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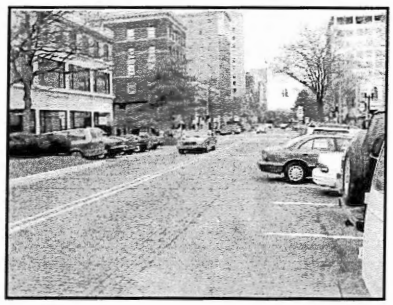
Washington Avenue Corridor



The single most important element in any downtown is its "main street", the street or crossroads where retail activity is concentrated. This street anchors the commerce center and is identified by workers and visitors as the street that symbolizes downtown.

Background

From Old Town to South Street, reestablishing Washington Avenue as the center of the downtown is critical. When the city was first incorporated, Washington Avenue connected North (Old) Town to South Town (South Street at the Capitol Hill Station). The link along Washington Avenue was further strengthened and expanded when intercity rail service was established in south town along the Grand Trunk Railroad. Commercial development lined both sides of Washington Avenue from Saginaw Avenue to South Street and trolley lines were established. Commerce continued to flourish through the 1950's.

As was the case with many communities during the 1960's and 1970's, downtowns were faced with competition from suburban malls and the major anchor stores moved out. Smaller stores, unable to attract sufficient numbers of customers, either went out of business or followed the larger stores to the mall. Many storefronts along the Washington Corridor were empty and efforts were begun to revitalize downtown. One such effort was the city's first Urban Renewal project which cleared the land for the Lansing Community College campus which is bounded by Shiawassee Street on the south, Capitol Avenue on the west, and Saginaw Street on the north, and Grand Avenue on the east. The plans for Lansing Community College ultimately included the closure of Washington Avenue to vehicular traffic for its present use as the primary pedestrian artery through campus. Subsequent urban renewal efforts along North Washington Avenue resulted in an extension of the pedestrian mall from Shiawassee to Michigan Avenue and in the demolition of retail businesses (with second and third story residential units) and their replacement with large office buildings which contained no first floor retail use and no residential uses.

At approximately the same time, the State of Michigan purchased and cleared several hundred acres of land through the south portion of the downtown area to construct I-496. This new freeway acted to isolate the southernmost portion of the Washington Avenue commercial area. Reduction of the commercial area from eighteen (18) to six blocks further destabilized the downtown. Continued replacement of retail businesses by office uses in the remaining six blocks, particularly at the first floor level, helped

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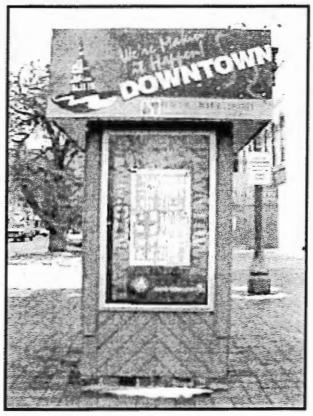

Information kiosk on Washington Ave.

to substantially reduce the retail capacity of the downtown. By the 1980's, the reduced viability of retail uses and the federal tax structure worked to make office building construction the most profitable type of construction. Late in the 1980's, overexpansion of the national office market, interest rates, and tax changes halted the local development of several office buildings leaving them as surface parking lots. During the 1990's the City has attempted to reestablish a viable commercial core within the Washington Corridor by creating a Principal Shopping District (PSD). The PSD is a special assessment district where funds collected are used to support a small staff to retain and recruit new businesses, maintain the physical environs, as well as plan promotions and events designed to bring more customers into the downtown and Old Town.

Land Use

The *Washington Avenue Corridor* must be established as a destination location for the convention/tourist/office worker/occasional visitor to meet. The Corridor must be identified as the major link between the primary office, retail and convention/visitor and entertainment areas. The City in cooperation with the PSD, must work diligently to establish and retain a healthy mix of retail, commercial, and entertainment uses which will support the development of new housing within the area. Loft apartments on second and third floors are encouraged, as is the conversion of the upper floors of taller buildings where appropriate in the central area between Saginaw and Kalamazoo. Throughout the Corridor, opportunities for the renovation of existing housing and new construction of moderate to high density (condominiums and multi-family housing) should be explored and supported where appropriate (generally north of Saginaw and south of Kalamazoo Streets). To encourage the retail component, it is recommended that current ordinances be amended to require first floor commercial use in all new and substantially renovated buildings along the Corridor.

Land use along the Corridor should generally be high intensity, destination type uses that will create the critical mass necessary to draw potential customers into the area and support the creation of a trolley system along the Corridor.

Urban Design

The design features of the Washington Corridor must be integrated and inviting. A comprehensive and detailed study of the various design elements in public spaces and their relationship to private spaces is recommended in order to achieve a "finished" and

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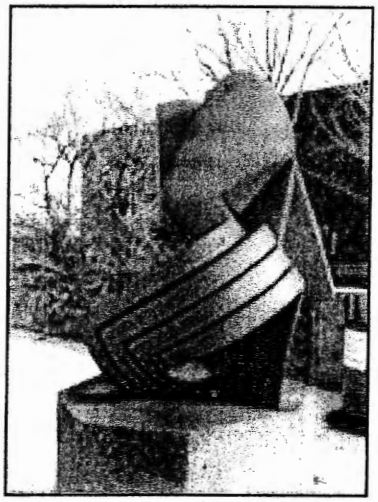
aesthetically pleasing environment. Below are listed the elements, both land use and urban design which must be achieved to provide a successful revitalization.

The Washington Corridor must:

- Develop critical mass both in terms of retail and residential uses.
- Institute street level public interest elements to draw people into the corridor.
- Develop thematic identity to unify the corridor *throughout its entire length* for street furniture, storefronts, street lights, signage (public and private) and other visual elements which are then coordinated by a system of wayfinding which is visitor friendly and aesthetically pleasing.
- Organize land uses such that first floor uses are retail with upper level mixed residential and office uses.
- Establish pedestrian and alternate forms of transportation in addition to vehicular circulation which makes the entire corridor accessible and easy to transverse.
- Integrate with east/west circulation patterns which are user friendly and reduce the need for vehicle parking close in to the central shopping area.
- Interface with east/west circulation patterns to more closely link museum, entertainment facilities and office workers with the central shopping area.
- Create a major focal point at the intersection of Michigan and Washington Avenues.



Public art along North Washington Square

The Washington Corridor is critical to the revitalization of the downtown. Ultimately, the catalyst for motivating the entire corridor will begin with the intersection of Michigan and Washington Avenues. This intersection is unique in that all elements converge at this location. This intersection should be the focal point of the Capitol City.

Circulation

Effective movement of people along the entire length of the Washington Corridor is necessary to promote and support diverse downtown development and particularly retail businesses. Effective circulation patterns must be established for pedestrians, bicycles, and vehicles.

Traffic circle at Michigan Ave.

It is recommended that a trolley system be established in cooperation with the Capital Area Transportation Authority (CATA),

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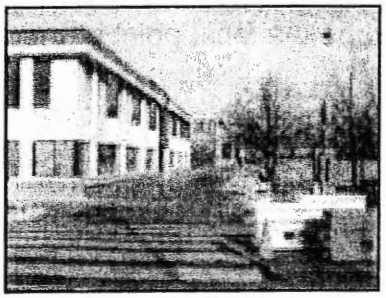
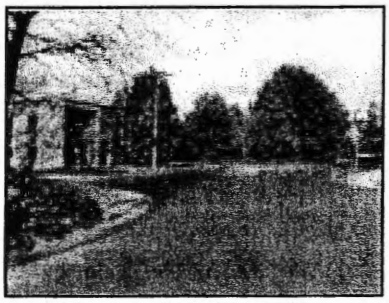
along the length of the Washington Corridor from Grand River Avenue in Old Town to Capitol Hill Station at the railroad tracks south of I-496. A study to determine the exact route should be completed. The main north/south route would interface with several east/west routes to provide good accessibility to all areas within Central Lansing.

The trolleys would run with five minute headway during peak times (fifteen minute headway on non-peak times) and would be free to users. Such a system would allow people to park personal vehicles at remote locations and ride the trolley into the downtown, thereby reducing the need for parking close in to the downtown as well as reducing the cost. People using the trolley would also have easy access to the main CATA Transportation Terminal and could easily utilize public transportation from home to work/shopping/entertainment and back. The trolley system would also enhance the opportunities for office workers to readily move through the entire Corridor to shop and eat any time during the day or evening. It would also provide tourists and conventioneers with an easy, safe and inexpensive way to move within the downtown area, get to Old Town, or south to the Capitol Hill Station area. Such a system should also act as an enhancement for current residents and potential new residents of the downtown area as it would allow them to move inexpensively throughout the central area without ever having to use their own vehicles.

South of Michigan Avenue, the trolley system would continue all the way to Capitol Hill Station. It is imperative that the area south of I-496 be included in this revitalization effort; otherwise it will decline and not reach its commercial potential. This area also contains possible locations for remote parking lots adjacent to the trolley route which could be utilized by downtown parkers at little or no cost.



Washington Corridor between Shiawassee and Ionia.



Washington Corridor between Saginaw and Shiawassee.

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Parking:

The Washington Corridor has the potential to provide a wide variety of parking options at different locations along its length which should be attractive to potential customers or residents. However, its use as a primary transit artery offers a diversity of circulation opportunities which do not require people to move their vehicles once they are parked nor do they even require a personal vehicle to be used in order to avail themselves of working, shopping, educational or entertainment opportunities in Lansing's Central Area.

Current right-angle parking on South Washington Avenue.

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RIVERFRONT MAP

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Riverfront

In cities around the world, the riverfront has served as an enhancement to the area, and land along the banks of the river is consistently noted as prime real estate. People are naturally drawn to bodies of water for comfort and interest.

The Grand River is a focal point for downtown Lansing that is already well loved and widely used. Lansing's River Trail is one of the longest in the country. The eight-mile trail links the Turner-Dodge neighborhood on the north to Old Town, Lansing Community College, the Commerce Center, and the Riverpoint area with east side neighborhoods, Potter Park Zoo, Crego Park, and the Michigan State University campus in East Lansing. It also extends west to link up with Moores Park.

Many Central Lansing attractions, such as the Turner-Dodge Mansion, the Brenke Fish Ladder, Riverfront Park, the City Market, the Lansing Center, Riverwalk Theatre, and the Impression Five, R.E. Olds, and Surveyors Museums are all located along the riverfront. The River Trail is also home to a number of special events, including the annual Riverfest, the Capital City River Run, and the Mayor's Walk.

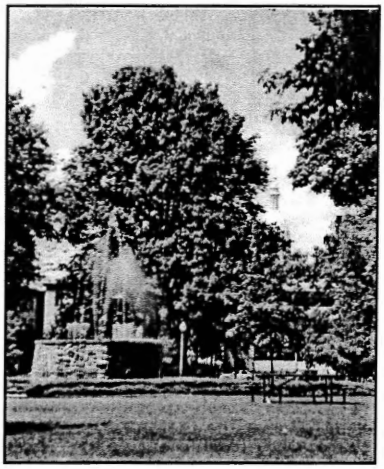
Several additional strategies will generate increased interest and activity along the river.

River Park Expansion

The River Trail and park should be expanded to extend the full length on both sides of the river, even where space would only allow a boardwalk cantilevered over the water. This would allow walkers, joggers and bicyclists to take loop routes along the river. It would facilitate modes of transportation other than the car and stronger ties between Old Town and the Commerce Center.

Open spaces abutting the River Trail should be pleasant and intimate, and vary in size and the extent of manmade elements. Plazas should accommodate large special events. The landscaping should allow views into and out of the river park by providing an overhead canopy and low growing plants.

Signage and maps along the riverfront should be updated as a part of the overall way-finding system. It is important that signage for open spaces fit into this way-finding system, but also project a distinct identity for each open space. They should include landmarks and possibly public art to serve as meeting places for park users. Activities on the river itself, such as gondola or boat rides, will generate added interest and attract visitors.



Open spaces are essential to the vitality of the City

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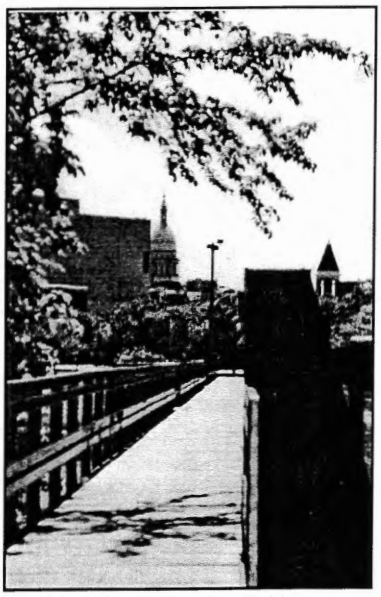
Bicycle and Pedestrian Bridges

Multi-use pedestrian bridges are essential to facilitate linkages across the river and to encourage use of the River Trail. With the future installment of residential development in Central Lansing these connections will become more valuable. The existing railroad trolley bridge should be renovated for bicycle/pedestrian use. Additional bicycle/pedestrian bridges should be considered, pending further study and economic feasibility, at two locations:



Provide More Pedestrian Bridges

- A bridge near the end of Washtenaw Street would provide a link between the museum and arts districts south of Michigan Avenue. This bridge could be a central amenity in an area with several sites that could be developed with a strong positive orientation to the river.

- A bridge near the end of Ionia Street would provide a public outdoor link between the Board of Water and Light's Ottawa Street Power Station and the City Market across the river.

All existing street bridges that cross the river should be improved for pedestrians and bicycles by providing direct and pleasant access to the River Trail on each side of the river and both sides of the bridge. All trails and park facilities should be universally accessible allowing elderly, disabled and injured people to use the park.

Physical and Visual Linkages to the River

In many parts of Central Lansing, one can be less than a block from the river with no idea that the river is so close. Views into the river corridor and physical links to the river should be enhanced, especially where streets end at the river. Where the river elevation is much lower than the surrounding area and views to the river are difficult, landscaping should provide a visual clue that something is special in this area. Buildings on the river should face both the river and the street, and be designed to draw attention to the waterfront and tie into the riverwalk system. They should encourage activity along the river corridor by providing terraces and public spaces to enjoy nature in the City.

Waterfront development must be carefully planned and constructed to prevent damage by flooding (See "Central Lansing Floodplain Areas" map on page 5-66). Some uses, such as gardens (not including any related buildings), parks, playgrounds, athletic fields, putting greens, natural paths and trails, public rights of way, private drives, and parking lots, have a negligible impact on flooding, and would be less affected by the flow of floodwaters. These uses are permitted under Lansing's Floodplain Control Ordinance (Chapter

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1288 of the Codified Ordinances). Any development or expansion of physical structures that has the potential to alter the level of the floodplain requires compensating excavations to preserve the floodplain's water impounding capacity. Variances may be granted for properties which have been reviewed and approved by both the City and the State, and for properties which are located in historic districts. The preservation of historic structures or the adaptive reuse of existing buildings may be among the best opportunities for riverfront development in these conditions.

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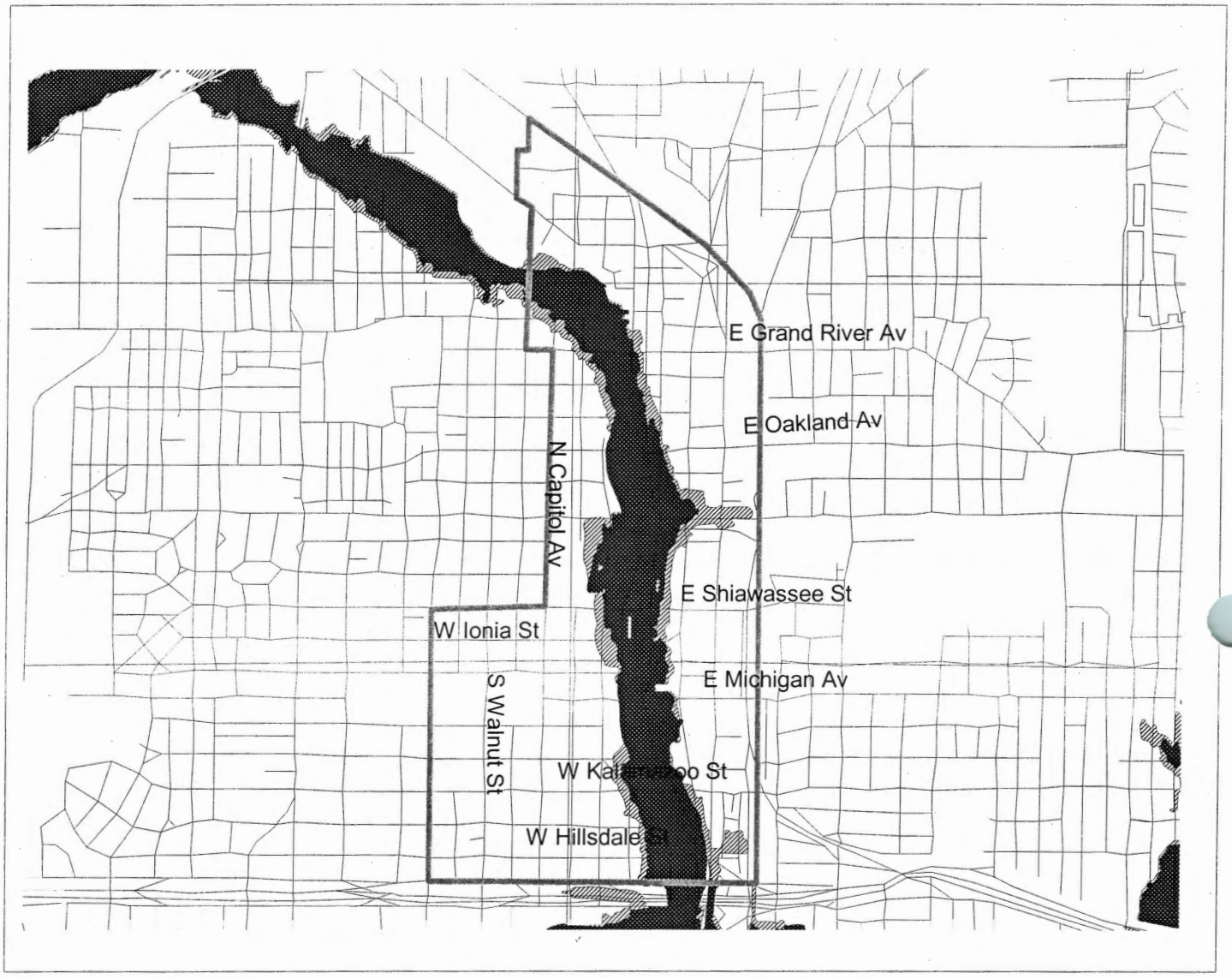
Central Lansing Floodplain Areas



A - 100 Year Floodplain

B - 500 Year Floodplain

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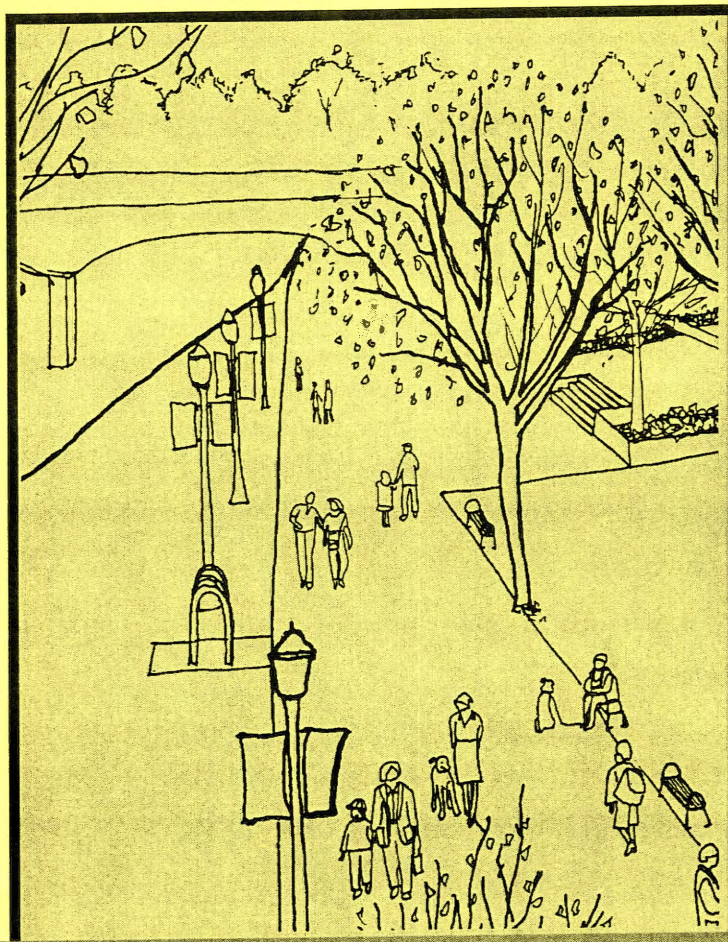
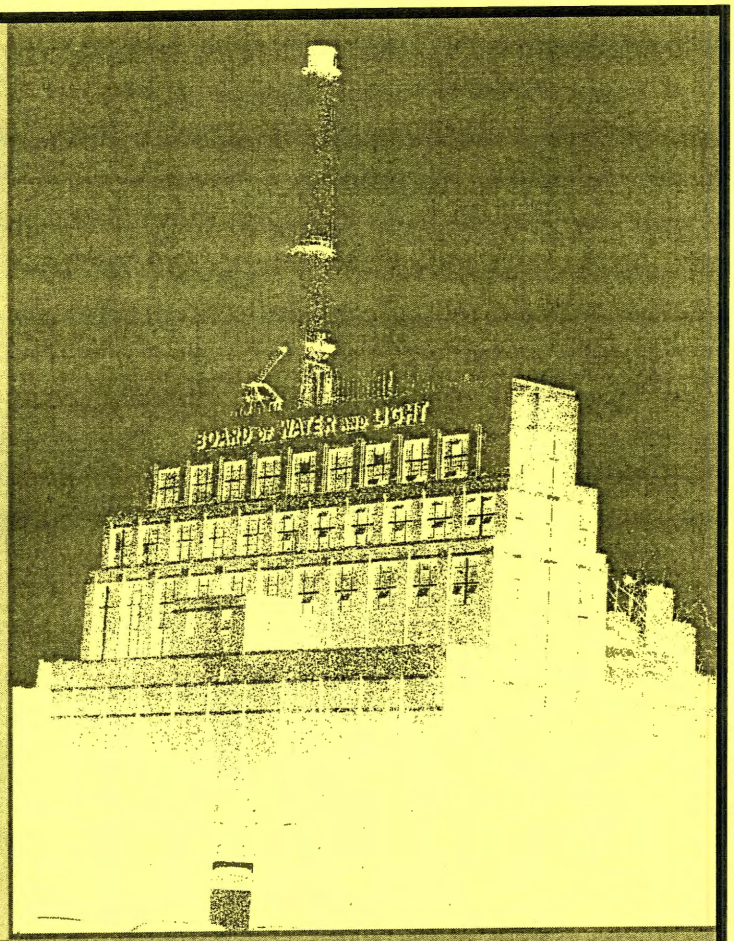
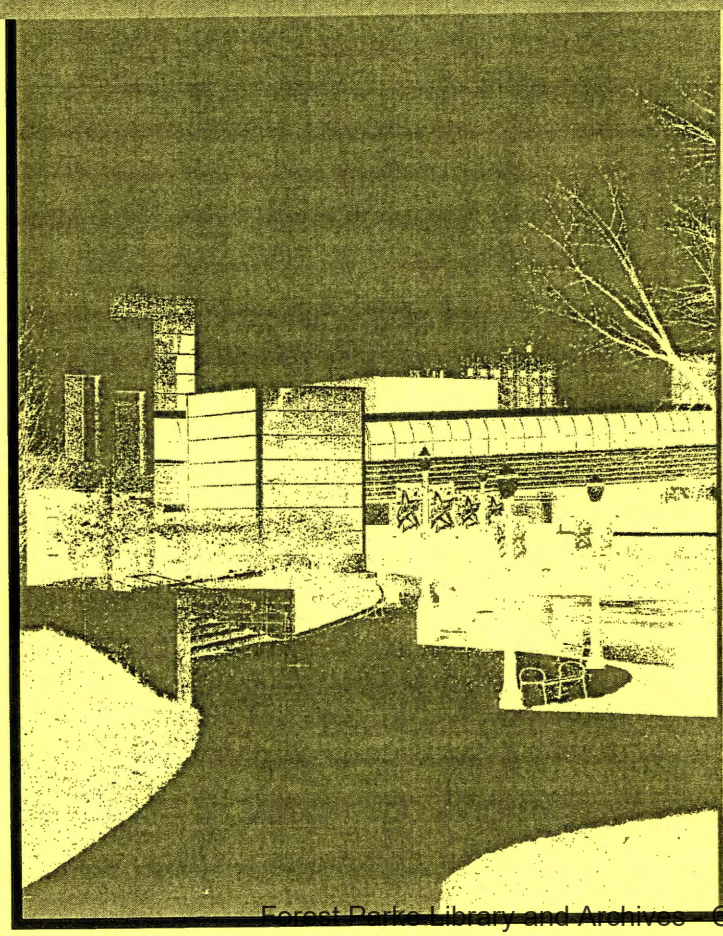
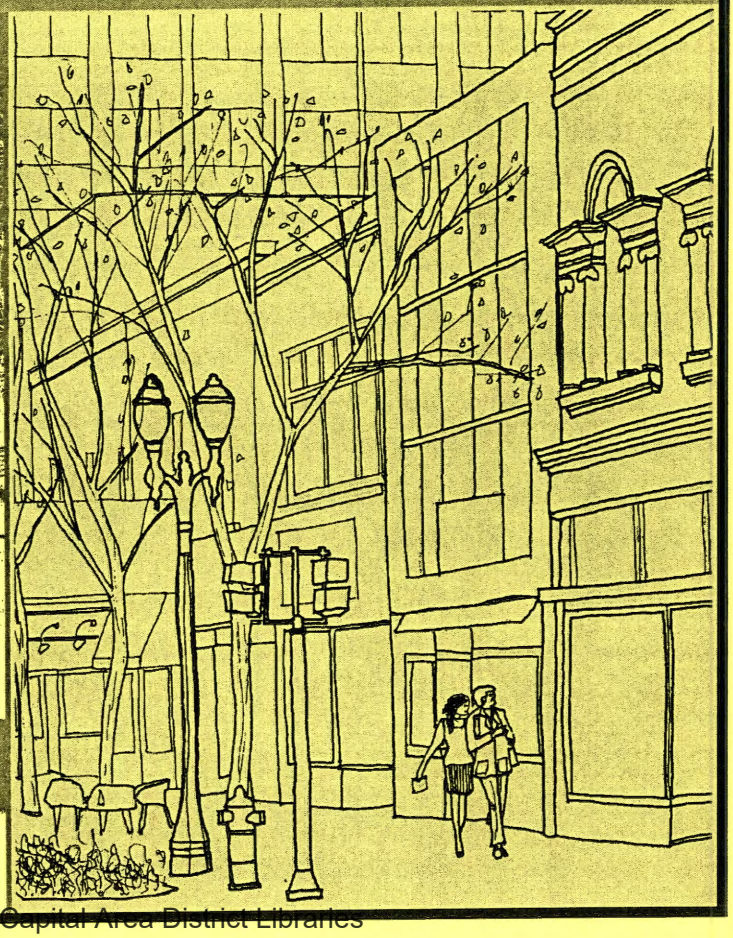




Section VI - STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION PLAN





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SECTION VI
STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

- *Designate a Primary Implementation Agency*
- *Launch Marketing Initiatives*
- *Promote Housing Rehabilitation*
- *Amend the city Zoning Ordinance and Map*
- *Form Public and Private Partnerships and Public/Public Partnerships*
- *Increase Code enforcement*
- *Launch a Cornerstone Project*

The success of any plan is directly related to the degree to which it is implemented. It is first critical to identify the agency or department which is responsible for coordinating the strategies and ensuring that they are proactively pursued. Strategies to implement a plan can then be placed into three categories: 1) political, 2) fiscal, and 3) regulatory. The political element requires knowledge, understanding and support of by the City Council, the Planning Board and community residents. Their support is then measured by the financial and human resources which are dedicated to the implementation of as well as support for changes in local ordinances and state laws which will allow more efficient and effective implementation.

The recommendations of this Plan are grounded in practicality. The transportation recommendations were particularly reviewed and passed the test of "can this really be done." Many of the land use recommendations have a basis in "supportable floor space" which was determined by a detailed market study. All recommendations, however, have a focus of making Central Lansing a vital and energizing place.

General Administration

The recommendations contained in this Plan are complex and must be accomplished utilizing teamwork and persistence. Given the complexity and the constant demands on staff for new projects, it is recommended that an agency or agencies outside the regular government structure partner with the Department of Planning and Neighborhood Development and other city departments as are deemed appropriate to guide and coordinate the overall implementation of the Plan. This agency or agencies would provide focused leadership and accountability. Their role would be to vigorously pursue downtown and Old Town development in accordance with the Plan. Responsibilities would include:

- Recruit new retail, office and manufacturing business to appropriate areas within the central area of Lansing in accordance with the Plan.
- Recruit developers who specialize in mixed use, transit oriented design, and historic preservation projects.

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- Recruit, organize and coordinate public and private sector resources to implement various elements and strategies of the Plan.

- Promote and market downtown and Old Town locations for new and/or expanded business opportunities.

- Create promotional and marketing activities such as festivals and special events, which will draw new customers into the downtown and Old Town area.

- Work with other quasi-public entities (such as Lansing Entertainment Public Facilities Authority (LEPFA) to ensure success through coordination and teamwork.

- Produce an annual report on accomplishments and project completions as well as a detailed work plan for completing upcoming tasks.

To ensure vigorous implementation of this Plan, a full time position devoted to and focused on the above duties should be funded within a supportive agency structure, such as the Principal Shopping District (PSD). The agency structure must provide a stable environment, with a readily accessible vehicle for coordinating with city departments and developing complementary interagency work programs. It must also provide dependable funding, and be a "known quantity" in the community (reducing the overall organizational start-up time) in order to provide efficient and effective implementation.

Political/Educational Administration

The best way to ensure that the Plan will be supported and implemented in the future is to empower citizens through education, knowledge and continued opportunities to participate and evaluate the strategies contained in the Plan.

Therefore the City, through the Department of Planning and Neighborhood Development and the Planning Board, will develop continuing education programs for the general citizenry about various aspects of the Plan.

In addition, an interactive feedback and assessment system will be developed by Planning Board and staff in order to annually update the Plan recommendations and to determine priorities for the upcoming year.

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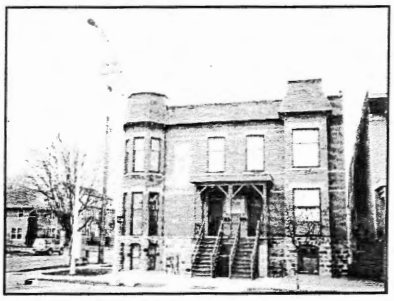
Financial Administration

The Plan will be supported financially in a variety of ways. The primary governmental support will be in the form of financial support for public improvements and other capital expenditures. These proposed expenditures will be identified and requested annually in request for appropriations through the Capital Improvements Program (CIP). Additionally, funding would be available to the PSD through special assessments and other donations, grants or contracts. Additional financial support will be provided through:



Existing Neighborhoods Must be Stabilized

- The continued use of Community Development Block Grant funds for housing rehabilitation and other related projects which benefit low and moderate income families
- Economic Development Corporation funding
- Historic Preservation Grants and new State tax credits for residential and commercial structures
- Capital Improvements Program (CIP) general fund dollars for public improvements as identified and prioritized
- PSD funding
- Other grants and loans
- Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

Regulatory Administration

Regulatory administration is intended to address problems of "bureaucracy," conflicting regulations, and the assessment of ways to streamline "process." There are several strategies under consideration which address these issues:

- Review and amendments to the existing Zoning Code which will enhance opportunities to realize Plan objectives. Primary among the possible changes would be the creation of an Overlay District which would emphasize mixed use development and address issues of design, flexible parking and landscaping.

- Signage
- Architecture
- Landscaping
- Subdivision Regulations
- Parking Standards
- Building/Zoning Codes

- Possible modification of the Building Codes to support more mixed use and adaptive reuse of existing buildings.

- Possible modification of Public Service codes related to street, curb and sidewalk design.

- Possible modification to the landscape, screening and buffering code to enhance general design throughout Central Lansing.

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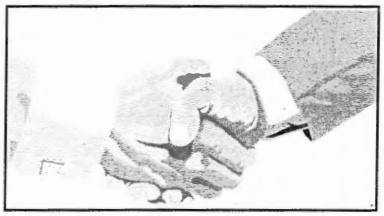
Form Public/Private and Public/Public Partnerships

This will be vital if there are to be any meaningful inroad to implementing the Plan. The City's financial resources for major projects will be limited. The majority of the current TIF revenue will continued to service bond debt until the year 2023. It will be necessary to look to the private sector to assume a major role in the implementation of this Plan. Additional private investment will not only increase TIF revenue (which will enable funding for additional public improvements), but it will also create a momentum for more private investment.

The public sector can participate in the process with concentrated code enforcement activity, tax incentives, streamlined regulatory processes, technical assistance for buildings and facades, and targeted infrastructure improvements. It is important for the City to work in partnerships rather than just enforcing regulations.

Other public sector initiatives chould include efforts to establish a school in one of the neighborhoods (e.g. Durant Park Village, River Vista, etc.). According to residents, this is something that will provide a stabilizing influence in the area. Reestablishing the elementary school in this neighborhood would be a major step in promoting the residential base in this area of Central Lansing. The close cooperation of the City and the school district is central to this strategy and is one example of a public/public partnership.



Implementing the proposed traffic pattern within the Central Lansing street network will also require a public/public partnership, namely city and state cooperation. The conversion of Cedar and Larch to two-way traffic will require close cooperation and joint funding. However, what better venue to demonstrate city/state cooperative projects than in the State Capitol?

Other public/public partnership efforts will be necessary for making Lansing Community College more integral to the flow and energy of the surrounding districts. This will also make nearby commercial and service establishments more accessible to LCC students and faculty, and could decrease the demand for parking.

Increase Code Enforcement

Throughout the Plan, there have been strong messages relating to the need to increase the residential base in Central Lansing. There are a number of residential pockets as well as neighborhoods located in or near the study area. These areas are current opportunities to build upon residential development. More residential land use in Central Lansing will provide even more opportunities to add "supportable floor space" in the area, thereby adding to the vitality of the area. Concentrated code enforcement efforts would contribute to the stabilization of these areas, thereby advancing private investment.

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Launch a Cornerstone Project

It will be very important to begin at least one initiative once the Plan is adopted. This will create momentum for implementing the balance of the Plan. Of course, the Plan is designed so that several initiatives could begin at the same time and continue on parallel tracks.

A cornerstone project will likely draw a significant amount of attention. However, other initiatives are recommended for quick implementation, most notably Phase I of the recommended circulation improvements. These can be done with little capital investment and can further the goals and objectives of this Plan.

Supporting Projects

As the Plan advances, there will likely be a need for other analytical efforts that support ongoing implementation. This Plan should lead to a variety of supporting projects, including:

- Initiation of a physical and cultural resource inventory and analysis which will be applied when establishing future development patterns
- A Street Conversion Traffic Study for the west side of the Grand River, excluding Washtenaw, Ionia, Shiawassee
- A Street Conversion Traffic Study for the Cedar-Larch Corridor
- The study, modification, and implementation of the way-finding system in the City
- Land Use Studies/Plans for Scofield Place and River Vista
- An ordinance requiring first floor retail uses in the area between the Grand River and Capitol Avenue from Lenawee to Michigan and from Michigan to Shiawassee as redevelopment or substantial rehabilitation occurs
- Trolley stop and shelter designs
- Historic Resources Inventories
- Washington Avenue Corridor Studies and Design Charrettes
- Saginaw Street Crossing.
- Possible trolley route alignment options
- Design and location of all trolley stops and shelters.
- Possible roadway alignment through North Washington Square, in conjunction with a first floor retail ordinance.
- South Washington Avenue at Riverpoint.
- South Washington streetscape and street furniture.

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Create a Sense of Place

Neighborhood and district names of the concept plan should be promoted to establish a sense of place for new development. A key element in determining a prime business location is knowing that a site is part of a larger, stable entity. Developers have already used this concept in their marketing strategies, particularly in Old Town, the namesake of a number of businesses. This practice should extend to other areas to reinforce the identity of each district.

CONCLUSION

Following the recommended implementation strategies will demonstrate the strong commitment of the City of Lansing to the revitalization of the downtown.

The City has a great opportunity to create a people-oriented environment within Central Lansing, a special place with restaurants, entertainment and other amenities for workers, residents, and visitors. Many great cities have utilized their waterfronts for this purpose, and in doing so have established a distinctive identity. Central Lansing has the Grand River and numerous districts, each with its own character, all of which are essential to the long-term growth of the downtown area.

The improvements proposed in this Plan can create a special identity for Lansing. Each recommendation is intended to contribute to the character of the particular area and to ensure a stable business environment from which the other activity centers can benefit. Further, the recommended uses for these districts are supported by a thorough market analysis of the area. Similar projects in other cities throughout the country have had important positive impacts on the success of the downtown.

People living in the downtown area will add vitality beyond the eight-to-five working day. The existing and proposed residential neighborhoods in and near downtown will expand this important population. Additionally, the circulation recommendations will work toward improving way-finding and a more pedestrian friendly environment for the residents, workers and visitors.

Downtown Lansing has the potential to be a great attraction within the region. The combination of proposed future land use patterns, circulation improvements, streetscape improvements, riverfront development, increased entertainment and new housing will position the City as the preferred place to work, live and visit in the future.

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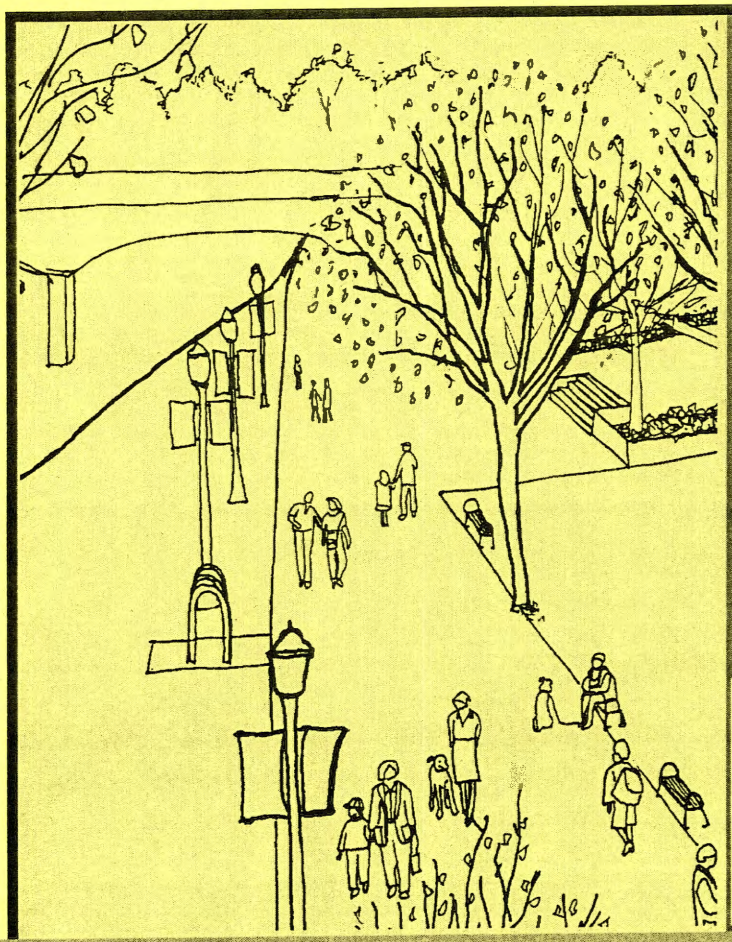
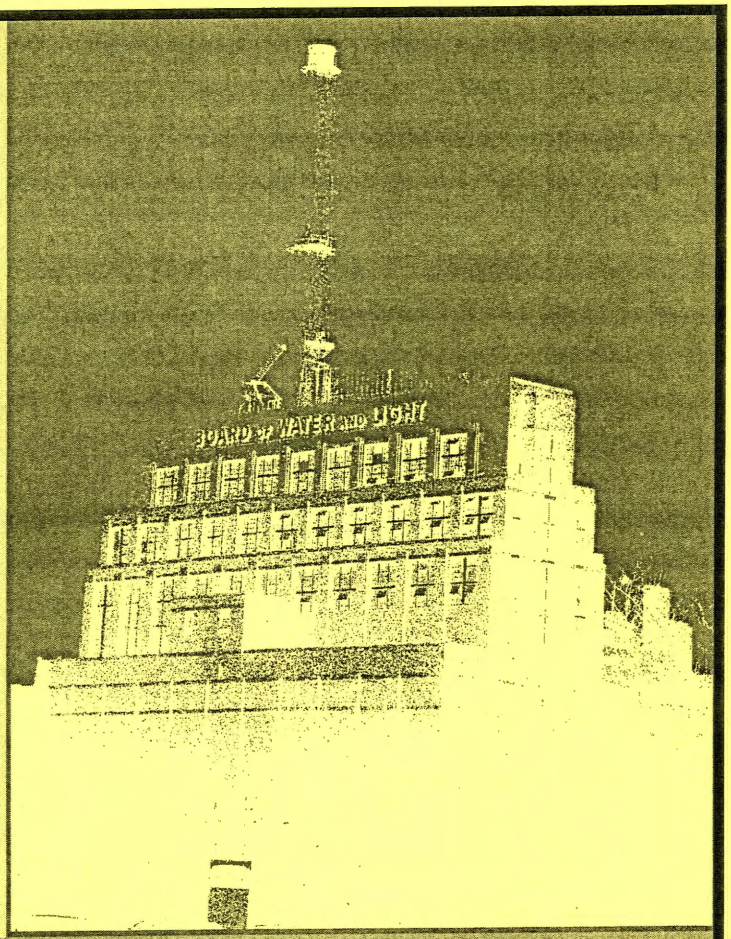
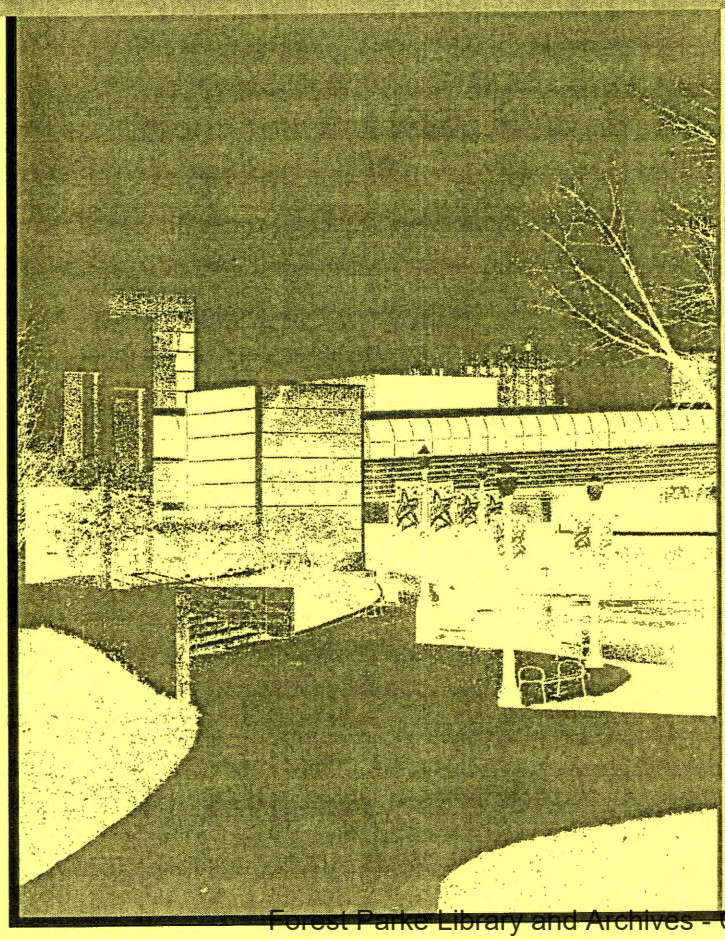




Appendix - STEERING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION



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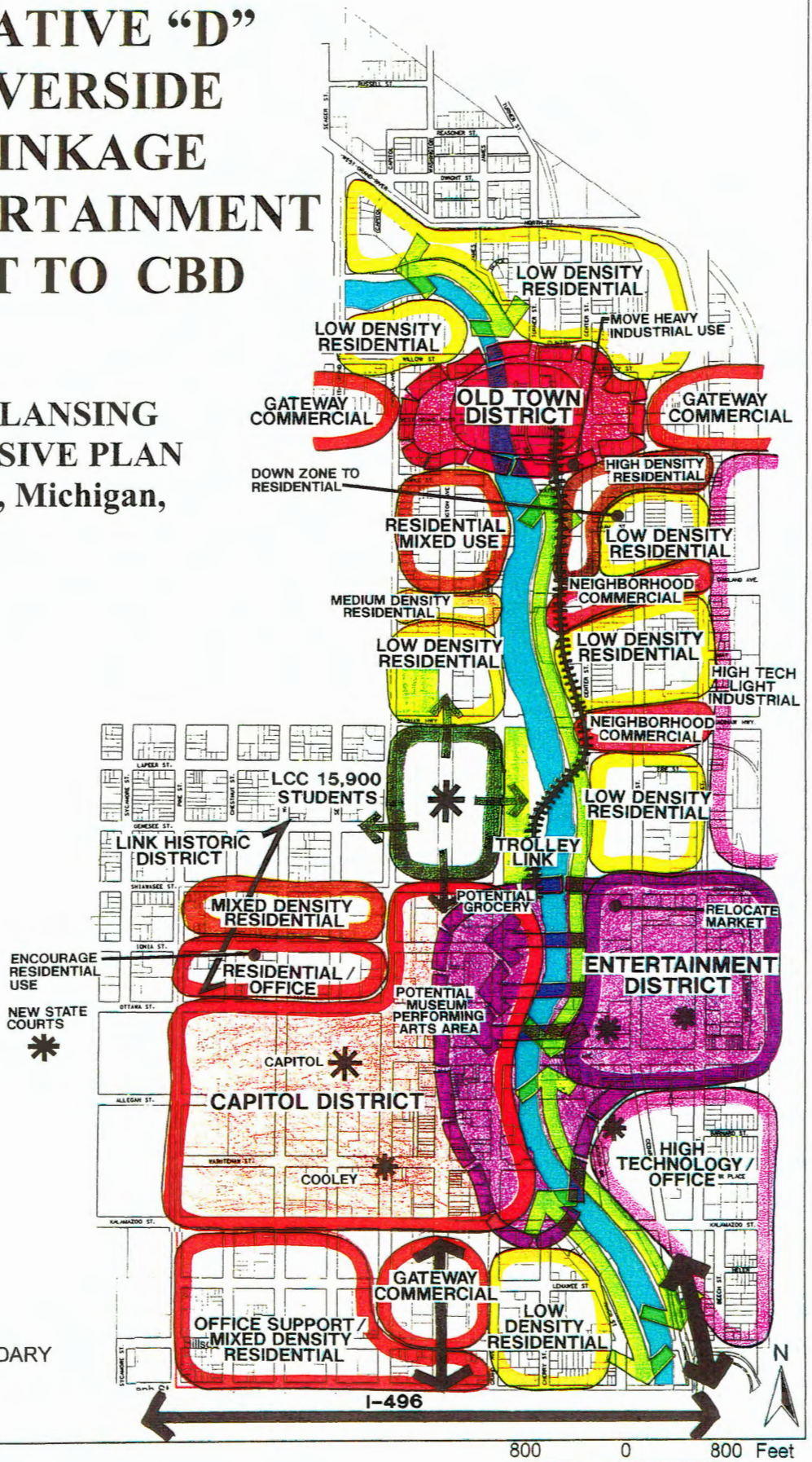
ALTERNATIVE "D" WEST RIVERSIDE FOCUS/LINKAGE OF ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT TO CBD CORE

DOWNTOWN LANSING COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
City of Lansing, Michigan,



LEGEND

- PARCEL LINES
- ROW LINES
- STUDY AREA BOUNDARY
- GRAND RIVER

3/98

Prepared By:

HNTB ARCHITECTS ENGINEERS PLANNERS

McKenna ASSOCIATES, INC. COMMUNITY PLANNING ▪ URBAN DESIGN

GREEN GROUP

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